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THE FUSION
OF
RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN EAST TIMOR:
A CULTURE IN THE MAKING

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1975, after 445 years (1530-1975) of intermittent missionary efforts at evangelization in East Timor, the Catholic Church put the number of followers at only thirty percent of the total population of some 700,000. Today in little less than two decades of Indonesian military occupation that figure has increased to over ninety percent. The process of conversion to Catholicism has been extensive and rapid since Indonesian military forces invaded this former Portuguese colony on 7 December 1975.

This thesis attempts to analyze religious changes in East Timor with particular reference to the relationship between the impact of religious variables and the socio-political realities in the current East Timorese-Indonesian conflict. My attempt can only be tentative and suggestive since these issues have yet to be more extensively researched.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this thesis is all my own work,

Joao Frederico Boavida

University of Oxford

Trinity Term 24 May 1993

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PREFACE

The discussion which follows is a product of my own experience of having lived through both the Portuguese colonialism and the Indonesian occupation during its first seven years (1975-1982). However, due to the deficiency of a comprehensive ethnographic study on the subject of East Timor in general, let alone the study of religious changes in this former Portuguese colony, my argument will fall short of providing a coherent picture of structural changes from pre-colonialism through Portuguese rule to the succeeding Indonesian occupation in a manner that a more detailed study might undertake.

The major aim of this thesis, therefore, is to describe religious changes, to ascertain their causes and consequences, and to explain the processes involved in and by which these changes, in turn, have led to concomitant transformations in other fields of the traditional system. That is to say, in and through discussing religious changes, I hope, I will extend the reader's understanding of the place of religion as one agent of change in the wider process of transformation that East Timorese have experienced over the centuries, as a result of the introduction of 'Catholicism' through Portuguese colonization and the subsequent extensive growth of the Catholic faith after the Indonesian invasion and occupation.

I will also discuss the emergence of a particular protest movement, namely 'the Psychopaths', by way of explaining the slow process of conversion under Portuguese colonialism in an attempt to counter-argue what anthropologists often take for granted as evidence of indigenous resistance to religious and cultural changes. Instead, my emphasis will be that protest movements, such as the Psychopaths, are positive signs of rural transformation. And the process of conversion, whether slow or rapid, whether authentic or superficial, is evidence that must be seen less as resistance to religious change and more as proof that there is no such thing as 'spiritual void' in pre-literate societies. After all, despite its unpleasant effects at times, change, beneficial or not to the people, is inevitable.[1] In the sector of religion, for example, a natural-organized religious syncretism, partly drawn from Natural Religion and partly from Organized Religion, is often the net result of the mutual permeation of two religions in the process of fusion and diffusion of two distinct cultures.[2]

To support my argument I will also provide examples to show how the process of piecemeal transformation through the introduction of Catholicism had led to unintended changes of far greater importance than missionaries could have expected at the beginning of Christianization.

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[1] The social structure of caste in rural India which has survived over twenty-five hundred years is probably one of the rarest exceptions of one aspect of a well-established ancient culture. Although this too has changed substantially through the centuries.

[2] Note that 'natural religion' will be used here to refer to religions of simple societies (Animism), while 'organized religion' means World's religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and so on.

In carrying out this study, however, my personal aim is to contribute to and to provide the reader with a different, if not new, analytical approach to the understanding of the current war of occupation and resistance in East Timor. That is to say, by focusing largely on the religious aspects, both before and after 1975, I hope that the end result would be a broader understanding of a conflict which came about while entirely under clear-cut political circumstances, as it developed and lasted over the years; the religious elements slowly but inevitably became a vehicle through which the cultural, social and political elements found a more effective expression of resistance.

I will illustrate my argument with factual changes, contrasting the two periods, pre- and post-colonial, in such a way as to offer a profile of the intermingled reality of religion and politics in the course of East Timor's occupation both by the Portuguese and the Indonesians. On the other hand, my discussion of the traditional religious belief and socio-cultural structures will be concentrated on the particular case of Bucoli, a village located west of Baucau on the northern coast of East Timor.[3] Whilst I claim no authority to talk knowledgably of the Bucoli people, due to the lack of formal research, my understanding of the Bucoli situation is based on my first hand experience during school vacations in the years between 1968-1974.

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[3] See Map 1 p. 16.

This thesis consists of an introduction, five chapters and a Postscript. Each chapter will begin with a brief introduction to the subject to be discussed. The introductory pages discuss in detail the subject and the approach taken in this study. Chapter One introduces East Timor in general, its geography, people and the structure and function of the traditional system. Chapter Two deals with Maritime Southeast Asia, a subject I feel important to discuss in order to compare and understand why East Timor stood to differ from its neighbours in some religious, social and cultural aspects despite common experiences shared in historical times through movements of people in the region.

It should be noted that both Chapters (1 & 2) are presented almost exclusively from an historical perspective. History has an interpretative value which, like anthropology, is essential for translating and understanding the social and cultural phenomenon of the society under study.[4]

Chapter Three embarks on the discussion of religion per se. Instead of seeking a dividing line between natural and organized religions, my main focus is to portray both as two complementary units. Although the two religions are contradictory in principles, in practice, their complementarity is possible; this is due to the practicality in which religion is conceived by the indigenous mind. That is to say, religion, for simple societies, cannot be understood on its own but always in the context of human relations which are ecologically conditioned by the means of production. In the case of the Bucoli, for example, it is within the agricultural cycle that the villager's religious life finds expression and which largely determines the patterns of religiously conditioned behaviour. It is within this framework that subsistence cultivators viewed and adapted Christian religious elements to the ritualization of ecology in the hope that, in so doing, they achieve maximum fertility of the soil and a fulfilling harvest. This adaptation, then, inevitably leads to a syncretic religious form of relationship, as we shall see in the case of the Bucoli.

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[4] See Evans-Pritchard's book **Essays in Social Anthropology** (1962) for more details on the affinity between anthropology and history. He argued that both subjects are essentially humanistic sciences with approaches equally effective and useful for interpreting culture.

Chapter Four gives an insight into the politics of religion and nationalism during the period of transition (May 1974-December 1975). Here I argue that the rise of modern Timorese nationalism, particularly after the collapse of Portuguese imperial rule on 25 April 1975, almost corresponded with the decline of the legitimate Church's authority. The period was analogous with 19th century-Europe where nationalism arose to condemn past religious traditional practices by asserting that history could be understood without making god the central historical agent.

Chapter Five argues that the eventual fusion of religion and politics, as one of the 'benefits' of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, has finally made the distinction of religious from secular functions less sharp. Although, the new symbolic ascendency of religion in the secular arena has not led to a corresponding increase in the power of religious priests, the Church as a social force has nevertheless responded adequately by providing a vehicle for an unprecedented opposition which has so far denied the Indonesians the accomplishment of their mission. In short, the bottom line of the argument is that the interaction between nationalism and religion has obviously made the former more effective and the latter more natural.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In preparing this study I have benefitted from the criticism and advice of many people. I thank, first and foremost, Dr. D. B. Tayler my supervisor and Dr P. Carey a long time supporter of the East Timorese struggle. I have also benefitted from the discussions with Dr R.H. Barnes and Dr. W. E. Biernatzki, S.J..

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INTRODUCTION[1]

In the wake of the invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1975, the late Ali Moertopo, the orchestrator of the code named 'operasi komodo', predicted that his forces would have breakfast in Dili, lunch in Baucau, and dinner in Lospalos, the easternmost part of the island.[2] The Indonesian General was convinced and assured by the superiority of his Armed Forces (ABRI), that East Timor would be conquered within less than twenty four hours, in what he believed to be a war of quick decisions.

Today, almost two decades later the war of invasion and occupation still lingers among a people who in the absence of external support have produced an extraordinary example of courage and determination in a struggle in which Catholicism[3] has finally shifted its role from being colonial tool to religion of

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[1] Some of the material used in this introduction is from an early dissertation I wrote and submitted for the fulfilment of Master of Studies.

[2] See Map 1 p.16.

[3] The words 'Catholicism' and 'religion' have no exact corresponding meaning in the vocabulary of the various languages locally spoken. The word 'fiar' from Tetum* meaning 'faith' or 'belief' is probably the closest in meaning to either words. Consequently, the Portuguese word 'religiao' for 'religion' became naturalised and localized. Yet when used by local people 'religiao' sounds distant, undefinable and gives a sense of aloofness if not one of mystery.

*Tetum is the name of the largest socio-linguistic group that inhabits the central areas of East Timor including the southeastern tip. Their language, Tetum, with austronesian origin has been adopted as the lingua franca of East Timor since colonial times.

Resistance. Yet both words 'religion' and 'Catholicism'[4], as recently as fifty years ago, were still very much unknown to most of the indigenous population.

Obviously, the situation that was to emerge after the introduction of Christianity[5] in 1530 (Baptista 1987:1) was one in which two different religious systems (one natural, the other organized) encountered, coexisted, permeated and eventually survived against all expectations, and in spite of all odds. Catholicism then was viewed as a colonial tool, and Catholic priests were regarded as colonial officers and traders (Boxer 1969; Dunn 1983; Hall 1968). There was no clear-cut difference between the secular and religious elements;, and forces of indigenous nationalism with religious elements, such as the Psychopaths, though admittedly the crudest form, stood to oppose the practices of both missionaries and colonial administrators.[6]

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[4] 'Christianity' is conceptually broad but it is used in this thesis to refer to one particular denomination, that is, Roman Catholicism. Both terms will be used interchangeably, if not synonymously to refer to the religion introduced by Portuguese missionaries in the sixteenth century.

[5] Although the official date of first Portuguese settlement on the island did not begin until 1769, the first missionary station was established by Portuguese Franciscan priests in 1530. And according to Baptista, for the Catholic Church this is the formal date they began their missionary activities. Please note that different authors give different dates. See for example Boxer (1969), Teixeira (1961) and Da Silva Rego (1966).

[6] It must be emphasized that this opposition, as I shall discuss more in detail in Chapter Three, was largely aimed at the secular power wielded by both missionaries and colonists since there was no clear-cut difference in function between the two. Therefore, while it was religiously motivated, it was political in that its objective was to defy the economic and political power structures of missionaries and official colonists.

It is against this complex background development that, what was to surface after the Indonesian invasion did captivate my interest and resulted in the writing of this thesis.

In the current situation, Catholicism has become, overnight, the religion of the oppressed. As it will be shown, Catholicism is being used by many as a means of interpreting and discharging nationalist feelings. In other words, despite the significant role of the Catholic Church in the legitimating of colonial authority in the past, suddenly it is regarded as a repository for East Timorese identity in a situation where true secular nationalists find little space to move due to the repressive and despotic nature of the occupation. This eventually moves us on to the following question: What is religion?

a. What is Religion?

First and foremost, it should be stressed that since my subject will be treated here as an empirical problem, rather than a metaphysical one, the approach I will take is both descriptive and analytical, disregarding the question of whether or not religious ideas are true. It should be also stated at the outset, that it is not a major concern of this thesis to promote or establish a particular conclusion since it would be premature to do so without a preliminary research on the current situation.

Nevertheless, in the process of compiling material for this work I have encountered profound questions on the nature of religion which lie beyond the scope of this study. Like me, the reader will be most likely to ask the same questions as s/he flips through the pages of this thesis: 'What is religion?' It is an essential question, and one that needs to be addressed before we consider the primary issues of this specific study.

I should also stress at the outset that there will be no attempts made at defining religion; religion is extraordinarily complex. Therefore, the following analysis is more a working-hypothesis reaching towards a clarification rather than a definition. Smart, discussing the nature of a religion in his book **The World's Religions**, raises the following two questions:

> Is there some essence which is common to all religions? And cannot a person be religious without belonging to any of the religions? (Smart 1989:11).

These are two type of questions that inevitably could lead one into profound metaphysical enquiries about religion. But in his own attempts at providing an answer, the tenor of his argument, as the following extract shows, demonstrates my assumption that a transcendent assumption taken to this particular work is not only inappropriate because unrealistic, but also such an approach would inhibit rather than extend our understanding of the true nature of natural religions - religions which are very much associated with concrete realities of which humankind is part and parcel. Smart rightly points to the fact that,

> The search for an essence ends up in vagueness - for instance in the statement that a religion is some system of worship or

> other practice recognizing a transcendent Being or goal. Our problems break out again in trying to define the key term "transcendent." And in answer to the second question, why yes: there are plenty of people with deep spiritual concerns who do not ally themselves to any formal religious movement, and who may not themselves recognize anything as transcendent. They may see ultimate spiritual meaning in unity with nature or in relationships to other persons (Smart 1989:11).

Obviously, by implication, Smart is in fact implying that, first and foremost, there is the need to understand and to acknowledge, as expressed in the Marxist tradition, the importance of the mutual interdependence of nature and humankind as a historical being. For Marx, as Morris has argued,

> ...religion was [not] an autonomous cultural phenomenon that could be understood in its own terms. ... Religion could be understood only by examining in specific historical circumstances the linkages between religion as a form of ideology and socioeconomic life. [By ideology it means the functions that religion purports to fulfil] seen as essentially those that ideology in general fulfils, namely it served as a moral sanction, as an illusion, as a consolation for unjust conditions, as clouding the "true" reality, and as a justification for inequalities (Morris 1987:42).

Marx went on to connect religion with the analysis of class structure by charging the privileged strata with their manipulation of religion as a tool for both preserving their wealth and maintaining their position of control over the lower classes of society and the dispossessed (Morris 1987:44; Lincoln 1985:267). The material interests of the dominant classes are moulded as ideological truths and where discontent surfaces the bearer is entertained with 'other-worldly aspirations' while serious challenges and conflicts are simply canalized into ritual forms where they can be purged and dismissed as childish and irrational (Lincoln 1985:267).

On the other hand, there is the 'romantic' view of religion or what is, as Lincoln has argued, the view that religion and religious institutions are essential for the establishment and maintenance of social integration (Ibid:266). In the Marxist tradition this is understood as the insight that every class adopts a distinctive ideology in the course of its struggle for the accomplishment of its own interests - a point which was established by Turner as being the Marxist view of the 'double function' of religion (Ibid:45). This, in Turner's words quoted by Morris, is that,

> religion had the double function of compensating the suffering of the poor with promises of spiritual wealth, while simultaneously legitimating the wealth of the dominant class. One solution to the apparent contradiction of class solidarity versus social integration is thus to argue that by legitimating wealth and compensating for poverty, religion unified society while also giving expression to separate class interests" (Morris 1987:45).

This viewpoint sums up the colonial situation in the former Portuguese Timor. On the one hand, Catholicism was used to legitimize the colonial authority of the Portuguese, while it simultaneously was used as a means to domesticate the East Timorese into being submissive to and tolerant of the authority.[7]

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[7] For only a good subservient Christian could enter the kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, what was to emerge after the Indonesian invasion in 1975 is a good case to exemplify Lincoln's argument that,

> ...one cannot legitimately conclude that religion and ideology are the tools of one party only, the ruling class...different religious forms attend the needs of different parties within society at different moments in their struggle (Lincoln 1985:268).

In spite of the significant role played by the Catholic clergy in the maintenance of colonial policy, Catholicism today is being used by these same East Timorese (now the true oppressed class) to legitimize their struggle against the Indonesian military occupation. From colonial religion or 'religion of the status quo', to borrow Lincoln's terminology, Catholicism has become the religion of 'resistance' (Ibid:268).

In the East Timorese context this shift was possible largely because of the sudden departure of the Portuguese colonial government, leaving the Catholic clergy with two options; either ally themselves with the dispirited Timorese people who had just come out of centuries of Portuguese colonialism or collaborating with the Indonesian military forces. In the absence of a prompt decision on the part of the Catholic clergy, it was the East Timorese people who made the move by allying themselves with the Catholic Church. A move prompted by two main factors: First the staggering degree of violence perpetrated by the Indonesian invading forces, and second, because with the departure of the colonial government, the Catholic clergy ceased to be regarded as a threatening entity and an arm of colonial power.

Thus, unlike in modern western capitalist societies where the process of societal change has been chiefly motivated and enhanced by material and scientific rationalization, in East Timor the process of transformation has always been dominated by religious rationalization. This, as we shall see in later chapters, has been the case since the transition from the pre-colonial to the colonial period and from the period of transition to the present date of invasion and occupation.

Consequently, the subsuming political implications of religious affiliation appear obvious if one carefully contrasts the scale and pace of the phenomenon of conversion to Catholicism during the Portuguese colonial rule as opposed to the period following the Indonesian invasion. The growth of Catholicism in the last 18 years has been more extensive and rapid under the Indonesian occupation than at any other period of Christianity's 445 years (1530-1975) of intermittent existence.

In retrospect, this phenomenal increase in the numbers of Catholics, if anything, sustains a clear message of political rejection of Indonesian presence that is consciously expressed through conversion to Catholicism as opposed to Islam,[8] the dominant religion of the occupying forces. At this stage one is bound to wonder what has been the role of East Timorese natural religion.

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[8] About 90% of Indonesia's 180 million people are Muslims. This puts Indonesia as the largest muslim country in the world, a fact which is not to be equated with 'the largest Islamic state'. Of course, Indonesia is a secular state ruled by the five principles embodied in Pancasila, the state's main ideology. Needless to say, that with the turning away from Islam the East Timorese-Indonesian conflict should be necessarily seen as religious.

b. The Natural Religion

"The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone"[9]

In his book **O Ultramar Portugues no Seculo XVIII** (1966), Rego, alluding to the conversion of indigenous East Timorese, notes with a certain tone of contempt that,

> Claro que o christianismo destas populacoes era tecido de praticas religiosas e de praticas supersticiosas. Nem era possivel pensar-se noutra coisa (Rego 1966:346).[10]

Even if one admits the ironic aspect of Rego's observation, what he actually acknowledges is the capacity of the Timorese to accept and reconcile two incompatible principles: On the one hand the Christian values that are essentially spiritual and theological; while on the other the indigenous natural values - values that are essentially reflective of humanity's relationship with nature and with other human beings. The system of relationship that was to emerge, therefore, was one imposed from without, colored with interests that were external to the concerns of indigenous Timorese.

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[9] From the hymn **All Things Bright and Beautiful**, quoted in Morris (1987:102)).

[10] "It is obvious that the Catholicism of these people [East Timorese] is woven with both religious and superstitious practices. It was not possible [for them] to think of any other thing".

Consequently, different expectations emerged. For the few privileged Timorese who first embraced Catholicism (Dunn 1983:17), conversion was seen as essentially a way to legitimize their authority and to preserve and extend their social privilege among the masses. Whereas for the commoners affiliation with Catholicism was a means of obtaining an education, and a way of compensating for lack of social prestige. In other words, religious conversion was regarded as an improvement of socio-political and economic living conditions. Thus, the indigenous view of religion was primarily in the context of material change in real life rather than in the pursuit of cosmological goals or spiritual salvation.

In short Catholicism was viewed by the indigenous East Timorese as an end in itself - if so, the ultimate question is "then why only 30% of converts"?. Obviously, this requires a complex answer, but, at present, suffice it to say that there were two main obstacles: the first obstacle was the lack of language (Portuguese), while the second obstacle was poll tax. Conversion to Catholicism was also equated with the adoption of a Portuguese name and a Portuguese identity card which would automatically make the individual a qualified tax-payer regardless whether the person had a job or not.

Unfortunately, however, since the dominant ideology tends to view religion essentially from its religious and theological context, without exceptions, a general rule has also been applied to the way natural religions are meant to be interpreted. Hence, nowadays it is almost impossible to talk of natural religion or animism[11] without referring to superstition, magic, fantasy, fetish, witchcraft, totemism, stones, trees, rivers, lakes, thunder, lightning, sorcery, volcanoes, and so forth. The list is by no means exhaustive; it includes everything that is irrational and superstitious and, in the understanding of European scholars, can best or worst be used to describe the primitive mentality (Evans-Pritchard 1965:1-10).

Animism, which had once been widely accepted as a 'minimum definition' of natural religions, had over the years led to a maximum[12] misrepresentation of the beliefs and practices of preliterate societies. In suggesting that simple societies "extended the theory of the soul to stones, weapons, food, ornaments, and other objects which we who are civilized would endow with neither a soul nor life" (Lessa & Vogt 1972:10), Tylor championed a theory in the study of 'magico-religious' phenomena that was later pursued by Fraser with 'a rather negative attitude towards it'. Hence current misrepresentations of natural religions. Today animism has become synonymous with belief in inanimate objects.[13]

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[11] The well-known word coined by Edward Tylor to mean belief in spiritual beings.

[12] Author's emphasis.

The Timorese animism[14] although it remained essentially intact under the colonial period, had practices in fact that were greatly influenced by the introduction of Catholicism. In the present context of East Timor, religion is probably best understood in its syncretic form, that is, as a composite of Christian values and local East Timorese elements.[15] Both in association with the other have interacted with other social and political values, producing an extreme example of social transformation which this thesis is set out to analyze.

However, before embarking on such a discussion, it is necessary to outline the historical background that has led to the present situation in East timor.

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[13] Tylor's contribution to the study of primitive religion is useful but on the other hand one should not attach too much significance to an argument that was vital at the time but it has since proved less valuable since it was chiefly formulated in the evolutionary fashion.Understandably, anthropology was then regarded as what is now physical anthropology. Tylor's argument at best was mere suggestion shaped by the 19th century anthropology trading around the speculation about superior and inferior human races.

[14] This must first and foremost be understood in its natural way, that is one in which the natural human mind conceives of different realities concerning the functioning of the cosmos. For example, the traditional Bucoli view of their universe is one in which existence is conceived of at three different levels. The upper layer (sky) represents 'hire ulatu' or 'our Head', the middle layer (earth) is associated with humankind and the third layer (underworld) symbolizes the ancestral souls. See Table 1 p.25 for the numbers of population by religions.

[15] While the East Timorese clergy may disagree with the above, funeral practices among the converts support my contention. For example, funeral ceremonies with excessive religious rites whereby rosary and mass are said at the grave rather than in a church with most of the prayers normally directed towards the 'soul' of the dead relative rather than to god and saints exemplify the syncretic combination of Christian and natural values.

CHAPTER ONE

PRE-COLONIAL TIMOR AND ITS TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

1. Introduction

In the absence of a comprehensive ethnographic work on East Timor my task of providing a comparative picture of the various East Timorese socio-linguistic groups is rather difficult. Apart from the Portuguese colonial literature, the very few available ethnographic publications by non-colonial sources have been limited to the Tetum, Bunaq, Mambai, Macassae and Kemak societies, which altogether represent only half of the total population (Hicks 1979; Friedberg 1980; Traube 1986; Forman 1980; Clamagirand 1980). Yet, those studies largely draw upon and are motivated by the theoretical framework advanced by van Wouden in his study of cross-cousin marriage and patterns of exchange alliance on the neighbouring islands of East Indies (Fox 1980).

Wouden's thesis, as a point of theoretical departure, at best, provides a framework within which comparisons are possible in the study of eastern Indonesian societies. At worst, this strong emphasis on his theoretical framework has influenced the abovementioned authors to concentrate for the most on one single issue (exchange alliance), and this has inhibited rather than extended our views to different fields of anthropological concern. Even the similarities singled out in those works are the most obvious and self-evident; and yet they could be considered self-explanatory simply because of common geographical conditions and comparable experiences of external influence in historical times (see Taylor & Aragon 1991; Barbier & Newton 1988).

In addition, the focus on van Wouden's work in the study of East Timorese society can also provide the reader a distorted image of a people who, in the course of their history, have developed a separate identity very much conditioned by the ecological factors and colonial history which, in turn, have added a distinct political property to the subject of marriage and exchange in a different time and space. In my discussion of traditional systems I will concentrate my thesis on a particular case, namely, the Bucoli. However, before doing so, I should first introduce East Timor as a whole.

1.1 Geographical location

Timor is the largest of the Lesser Sunda[1] islands which extend in a chain eastward from Java to Western New Guinea, including the sub-group of islands identified by J. Fox (1977) as the "outer arc"[2] of the Lesser Sundas. The land area of Timor is approximately 12,000 square miles; of these, 7,400 is the eastern

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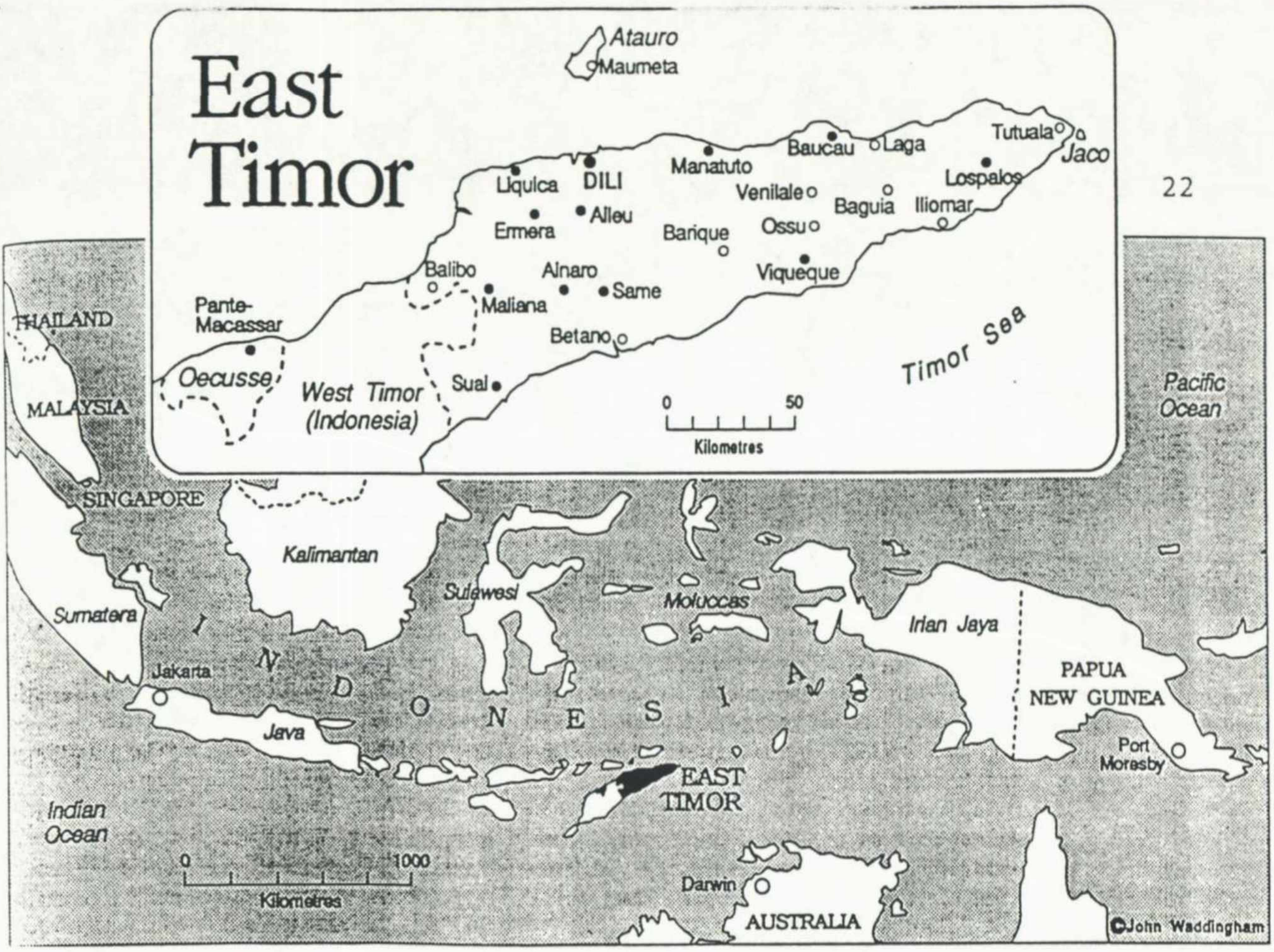
[1] See Map 1 and Map 2.

[2] In this outer arc, just below the eastern extreme line of the Lesser Sunda, from west to east, there are the islands of Timor, Semau, Roti, Ndao, Savu, Raijua, and Sumba, bordering on Australia to the south. See Map 3.


East Timor
Atauro
Maumeta
Tutuala
Jaco
Baucau
Laga
Manatuto
Liquica
DILI
Lospalos
Venilale
Baguia
Iliomar
Aileu
Ermera
Barique
Ossu
Balibo
Ainaro
Viqueque
Same
Maliana
Pante-Macassar
Betano
Timor Sea
Oecusse
West Timor (Indonesia)
Suai
0
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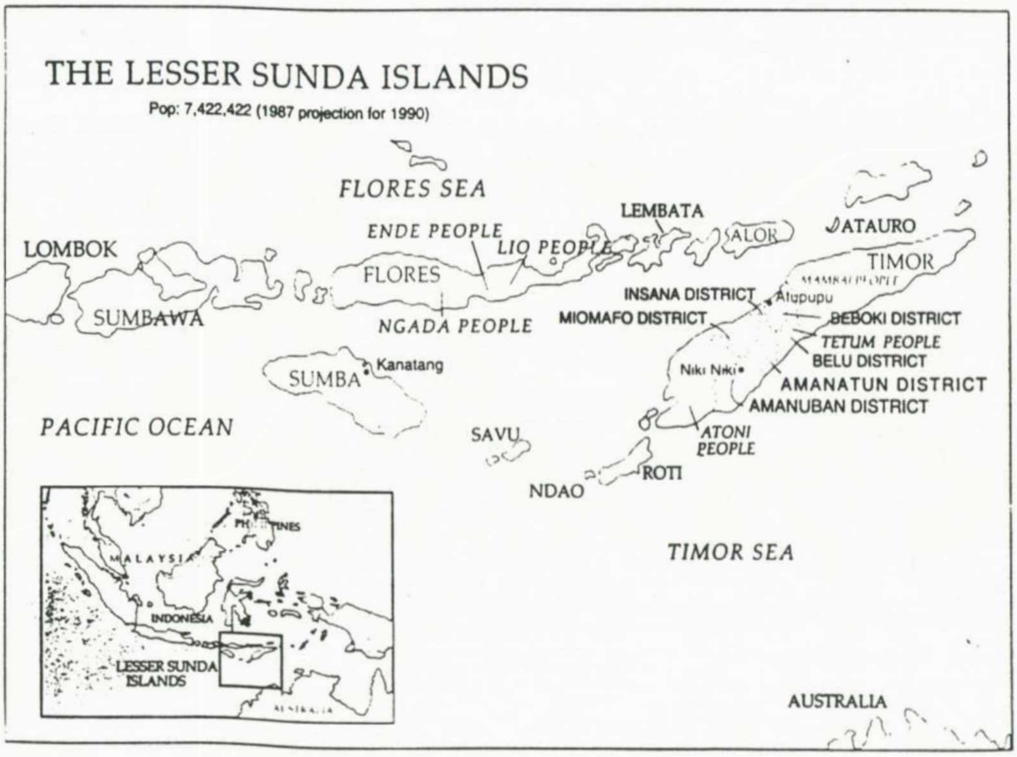
Kilometres
THAILAND
MALAYSIA
SINGAPORE
Pacific Ocean
Kalimantan
Sulawesi
Moluccas
Sumatera
Irian Jaya
INDONESIA
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Jakarta
Java
Port Moresby
EAST TIMOR
Indian Ocean
0
1000
Kilometres
Darwin
AUSTRALIA
©John Waddingham

Map 1 East Timor

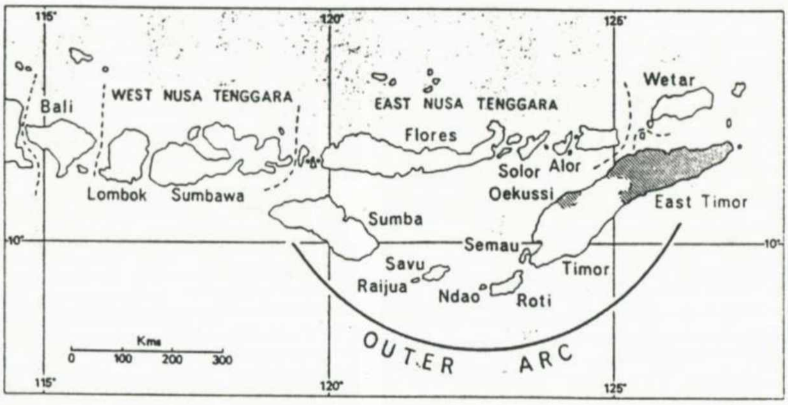
Source: ACFOA, Melbourne - Australia


THE LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS
Pop: 7,422,422 (1987 projection for 1990)
FLORES SEA
LEMBATA
ENDE PEOPLE
LIO PEOPLE
ALOR
ATAURO
LOMBOK
FLORES
TIMOR
MAMBAI PEOPLE
INSANA DISTRICT
Atupupu
SUMBAWA
NGADA PEOPLE
MIOMAFO DISTRICT
BEBOKI DISTRICT
TETUM PEOPLE
BELU DISTRICT
SUMBA
Kanatang
Niki Niki
AMANATUN DISTRICT
AMANUBAN DISTRICT
PACIFIC OCEAN
SAVU
ATONI PEOPLE
ROTI
NDAO
TIMOR SEA
PHILIPPINES
MALAYSIA
INDONESIA
LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS
AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA

Map 2 The islands of the Lesser sunda

Source: Taylor & Aragon (1991:202)

half known as East Timor, which includes the offshore islands of Atauro and Jaco, and the enclave of Oecussi in the western half. The arbitrary division of Timor into an eastern and a western part took place in 1904 as the result of a settlement package agreed upon by the two former colonial powers - Portugal and the Netherlands - to end their conflict in the region, a colonial conflict which lasted for some three hundred years[3].


115°
120°
125°
Bali
WEST NUSA TENGGARA
EAST NUSA TENGGARA
Wetar
Flores
Solor
Alor
Oekussi
East Timor
Lombok
Sumbawa
Sumba
10°
Semau
Savu
Raijua
Ndao
Roti
Timor
Kms
0 100 200 300
OUTER ARC
115°
120°
125°

Map 3 The outer arc of the Lesser Sunda Islands

Source: Fox, James (1977:5)

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[3] The origins of the Luso-Dutch conflict date back to the union of the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns in the middle of the sixteenth century during the reign of Philip II of Spain, against whose rule in the Netherlands the Dutch had rebelled" (Boxer 1969:107). Dutch influence in the region began in 1602, the year the Dutch East Indies Company was established. In 1859 the two powers signed a treaty which led the Portuguese to abandon Solor and Flores. The conflict was now limited to the island of Timor. In 1904 a settlement was finally reached. In 1949 when Indonesia gained its independence from the Dutch, West Timor became an integral part of the Indonesian Republic while East Timor remained Portuguese colony until 1975.

The Lesser Sunda Islands in turn interact within a broader and more complex geographical configuration of islands known as the Maritime Southeast Asia (MSEA).[4] The historical importance of these islands in shaping and reshaping the social and cultural values of the islanders will be also discussed in Chapter Two.

1.2 The climate

The climate of East Timor is affected by its proximity to both Australia and the rest of maritime southeast Asia. Throughout the island it is possible to speak of "a long dry season, low rainfall, and consequent semiarid conditions" as the basic features (see Fox 1977:4), but the physical setting of the island itself makes it possible to also speak of three main climatic and ecologically distinct regions: They are, running lengthwise from south to north, 1) the southern plains, 2)the mountainous central region, and 3)the northern coast (Jolliffe 1978:19-21).

First, the southern plains consist of the region running eastward from Suai to Viqueque. Here the climate is characterised by high rainfall with two wet seasons. This is a direct benefit from the region's full exposure to the winds blowing from northern Australia.

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[4] Its geographical location and definition are discussed in Chapter Two.

Second, the mountainous central region is the island's backbone extending eastward from Maliana to mount Matebian, separating the South from the North. In this region, in particular, its westernmost areas, the climate is considerably unpredictable. Its characteristic features are light rainfall brought by winds from the northwest and a long dry season (see for example Friedberg 1980). Its eastern extension is more temperate with a reasonable rainfall distribution and a dry season often interrupted with scattered showers blown from the southern plains.

The third region, the north coast, stretches from Liquica in the west to Lautem in the east. The region, by definition, has a low rainfall, one wet season and severe dry spell. This is particularly so in the regions running westward from Manatuto to Balibo.

1.3 Demography

There are altogether some thirty-one separate ethnolinguistic groups. Groups depicting Melanesian physical characteristics are the dominant one. But there are Malays, Chinese, Arab, Mestizo (Topazes), African, and Indians (Goa) who also make up the racial melting-pot of East Timorese society. This quasi-ethnic mosaic of people in such a small scale community, where the total population, at present, numbers around 500,000, reflects the common pattern of human diversity found throughout maritime southeast Asia - a characteristic which will be discussed in greater detail below[5].

The Melanesian look-alike population (Macassae and Uai Mua), are speakers of Austronesian[6] languages which, most likely, originated in the Bismark Archipelago about 2000 B.C.(Newton 1988). It is believed that these people are descendants of the 'Lapita'[7] people. In East Timor the Austronesian speakers largely live in the interior and mountainous areas where they were pushed to by the late-comers like Malays, Chinese, Arabs and the Portuguese.

The Malays migrated here from the mainland Southeast Asia, but over the years through socio-cultural interaction with the Austronesian speakers, both have formed an unique racial type which may be best described as 'Proto-malay', now the dominant physical anthropological feature of East Timor (Jolliffe 1978:19).

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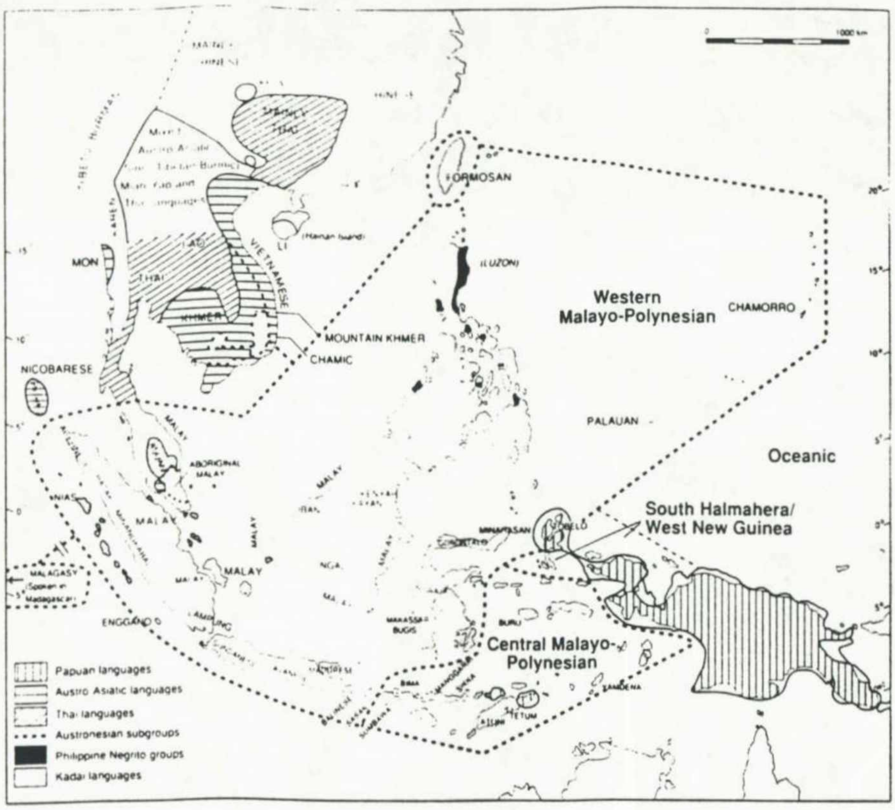
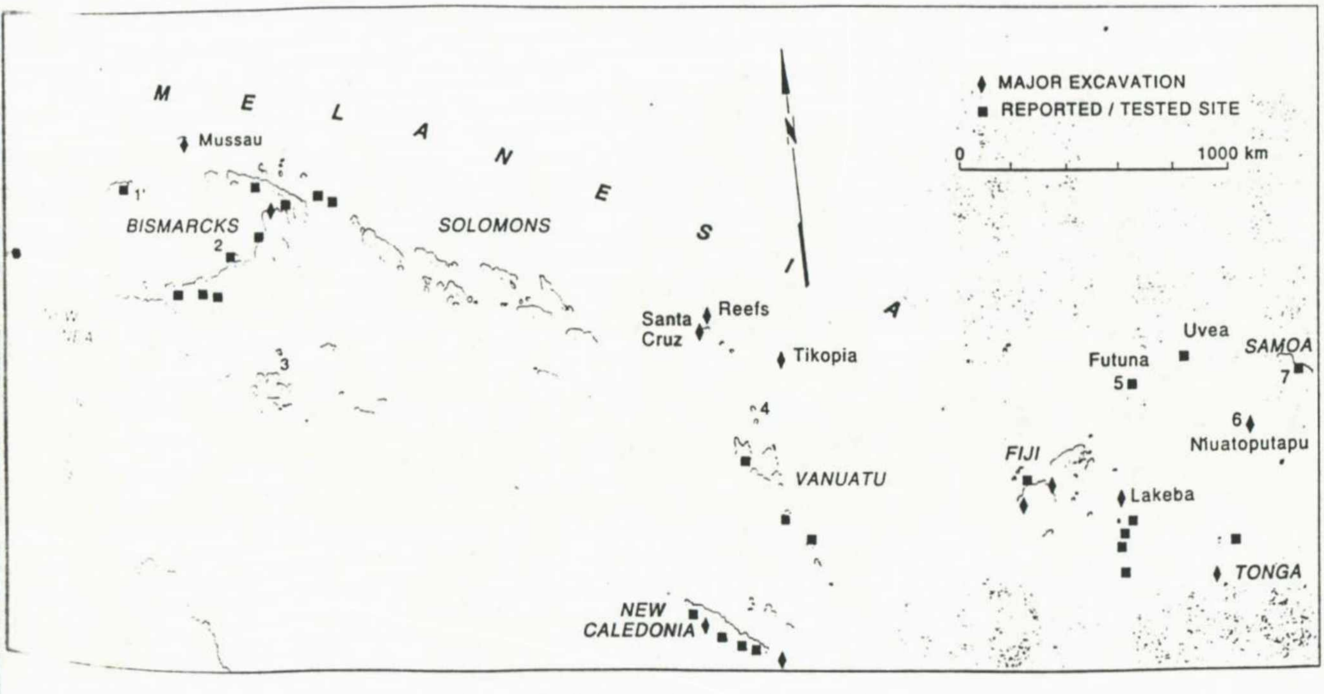
[5] In historical times Maritime Southeast Asia was the centre of immigration and trade of peoples from various places such as India, China, the mainland southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. This is seen as one of the main contributing factors to the great diversity of the region which in its own is already highly diversified.

[6] See Map 4 for the distribution of Austronesian, Papuan, and Austro-Asiatic languages in Southeast Asia.

[7] See Chapter Two for the definition of Lapita.


0
1000 km
FORMOSAN
(Hainan Island)
(LUZON)
Western Malayo-Polynesian
CHAMORRO
MON
THAI
LAO
KHMER
VIETNAMESE
MOUNTAIN KHMER
CHAMIC
NICOBARESE
PALAUAN
Oceanic
ABORIGINAL MALAY
MALAY
NIAS
South Halmahera/ West New Guinea
MALAGASY Spoken in Madagascar
ENGGANO
MAKASSAR
BUGIS
BURU
Central Malayo-Polynesian
TETUM
Papuan languages
Austro Asiatic languages
Thai languages
Austronesian subgroups
Philippine Negrito groups
Kadai languages

Map 4 Distribution of Austronesian & other languages in Southeast Asia. Source: Taylor & Aragon (1991:60)


M E L A N E S I A
Mussau
1
BISMARCKS
2
3
SOLOMONS
N
Santa Cruz
Reefs
Tikopia
4
VANUATU
NEW CALEDONIA
MAJOR EXCAVATION
REPORTED / TESTED SITE
0
1000 km
FIJI
Lakeba
Futuna
5
Uvea
SAMOA
7
6
Niuatoputapu
TONGA

Map 5 Map of Lapita sites

Source Taylor & Aragon (1991:60

The Chinese population are largely merchants originating in southern China[8]. Although their contact with East Timor dates back to historic times during the prosperous sandalwood trade, it was not until the Portuguese had set up trade link with Macao, following the 'pacification campaign', that permanent Chinese settlement began. According to Teixeira (1974),[9] in December 1973, the number of Chinese was estimated to have been 5,375; but, as Dunn suggests, since there was 'a large number of mestizo Chinese-Timorese who considered themselves Chinese in cultural terms the real figure was perhaps around 14,000 (Dunn 1983:9).

The Arabs like the Chinese were also merchants who came to the island via the sandalwood trade route. In the same year (1973) their number was estimated in the region of 240. A predominantly Muslim community, the Arabs were amongst the smallest ethnic groups on the island.

The Portuguese were the latest newcomers.[10] Their first official settlement in Dili, East Timor was in August 1769. In that year Governor Antonio Teles de Azevedo together with 1,200 people were forced to evacuate from Lifao (Oe-cussi) to Dili (now the capital city of East Timor) - a move motivated by the fall of Kupang to the Dutch in 1653 (Da Silva Rego 1966; Boxer 1969).[11]

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[8] The Chinese presence in East Timor clearly antedates the Portuguese. They came to the island in search of sandalwood which Timor was well-known for long before the arrival of the Portuguese. They took control over sandalwood trade and even after the arrival of the Portuguese that position did not change.

[9] Note that the number of estimated populations of main ethnic groups will be given here according to religions.

[10] The arrival of the Portuguese needs especial mention here since it marked the turning point in the history of the island in almost every respect. The Portuguese seafarers first sighted Timor in 1511 on their way to the islands of Spices. It was probably in the beginning of 1515 that they first set foot on Timor from the northern coastal area of Oe-cussi in Ambeno (Teixeira 1961:82). In the following two hundred and fifty four years (1515-1769) Timor remained no more than a port of call for the Portuguese who came from Macao, Larantuka, Macassar and Solor for the shipment of sandalwood.

The number of Portuguese in East Timor was very limited throughout the centuries. According to Portuguese record, quoted in Telkamp, the official figure of Portuguese residents in 1927 was estimated at 389, while in 1950 that number slightly went up to 568. Towards the end of 1960s there were some 700 civilian residents in addition to some 2,000 Portuguese soldiers found throughout the territory (Telkamp 1979:71-89). The soldiers were largely on holiday-duty from the then wartorn colonies of Mozambique and Angola.

Closely associated with the Portuguese were the Mesticos. They were a community of mixed races as a result of miscegenation between Timorese and Portuguese soldiers and 'deportados'.[12] In 1927 the number of 'mesticos' was put at 375, and in 1950 at 2,022. In 1973, it was estimated that there were at least some 10,000 throughout the country (Telkamp 1979). The smallest ethnic groups were the Africans and Indians from Goa. The former, mainly from Mozambique, was estimated in the region of 101 in 1927 and 54 in 1950. The latter was a community figured to be some 48 in 1950.

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[11] From what has been discussed so far it appears that the official settlement of East Timor also marked the period of decline of Portuguese empire in Asia. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Portuguese had been displaced by the Dutch throughout its Asian colonial possessions with the exception of Macao on the south coast of China, Solor and Flores both in the Lesser Sunda Islands.

[12] Deportados, a Portuguese word for political dissidents deported to Timor from Portugal and Africa during the regime of General Antonio Oliveira Salazar.

In conclusion, the total population of East Timor was relatively small. The demographic stagnation was mainly due to, as Telkamp has argued, the colonial policy of a 'fossilized population' characterized by a 'heavy corvee labour' and a 'considerable poll tax' (Telkamp 1979:80-89). While, the exact figure has always been controversial a study carried out in 1980 estimates that the total population of East Timor in 1975 was somewhere between 663,000 - 700,000[13], with an overall majority of 96 to 97% being indigenous East Timorese (Waddingham et al 1980).

1.4 The Language

In terms of language, it is obvious that with 31 ethno-linguistic groups the number of languages and dialects spoken on the island considerably exceeds that figure. However, since colonial times,

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[13] The total population in 1920 was given as 397,875. According to the latest Portuguese official census of 1970 the total population was 609,477 with a growth-rate of 1.7% per annum as from 1960. Waddingham, in his study shows that by the official estimates the population would have reached 663,000 in 1975. On the other hand, the East Timor Church, which kept its own record, put the population for 1974 as 688,771, slightly higher than the official colonial estimates. With the same growth percentage (1.7%) the Church estimates would have put the population at some 700,000 in 1975. Then the conclusion would be that in 1975, just before the Indonesian invasion the population was most probably around 700,000.

POPULATION OF [EAST] TIMOR

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
TOTAL	593,638	616,741*	618,530	628,842	627,694	674,550
Protestants	1,471	1,571	1,698	2,206	2,227	2,425
Moslems	453	455	487	228	234	240
Buddhists	5,748	5,455	6,100	5,846	5,942	5,357
Animists	424,472	438,407	431,646	434,285	423,430	457,309
Catholics	146,568	155,356	164,304	170,999	179,911	187,540
Catechumens	14,926	14,386	14,295	15,278	15,950	21,679

From: TEIXEIRA, Manuel. *Macau e a sua Diocese. X. Missões de Timor.* (1974). page 546.

* Translator's Note: The total given for 1968 is 616,741, but the sum of the other figures for the same year is only 615,630, a discrepancy of 1,111. All of the other annual totals in the table equal the sums of the figures given.---KS.

Tetum, the language of the Tetum people, the largest socio-linguistic group, has been adopted as the lingua franca. It is widely spoken throughout the territory with the exception of Lospalos, the easternmost part of the island. It is yet to be a full written language and since the majority of the people are illiterate, and because the Chinese found Portuguese a difficult language to learn, the lingua franca of Tetum has also become the language of commerce. On the other hand, Portuguese was the language of bureaucracy, education and media with only a small portion of population understanding it.

1.5 Traditional Structures: The case of the Bucoli

Situated west of Baucau, on the northern coast of East Timor, Bucoli is a relatively small community. Its 1,000-2,000 inhabitants in the late part of 1960s belong to the Uai Ma'a ethnolinguistic group with Melanesian physical anthropological characteristics.

Whilst it is often said that in the pre-sixteenth century period there was a powerful kingdom namely Waiwiku-Wehale (Jolliffe 1978; Taylor 1991; Dunn 1983; Francillon 1980), it is very doubtful that the Wehale kingdom did actually exert any real authority throughout the island.[14] If one removes the modern elements in today's Bucoli system, the structural picture that emerges resembles very much the one in historical times during which the island was divided in several small kingdoms with their own rulers based around 'knuo' or cult-sites[15].

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[14] The fact that the Portuguese did not succeed in having their rule established and confirmed in all parts of the territory well until the beginning of the twentieth century (more than two centuries after their first settlement on now West Timor) proves the lack of an established traditional power

As an example of the predominantly village-based system in 1975, Bucoli originated from two basic designs of group agglomerations: the cluster system and the linear system. The former is a group agglomeration of descendants with same lineage forming 'suco' or hamlets based around their fields/gardens, spring water or assembled around an important cult-site, usually the original home of long time ancestors. The latter, like the former, has the same basic elements of group definition, only, it is scattered along pathways or creeks.

Each suco is ruled by 'chefe do suco' or the suco leader. A suco normally consists of ten to twenty core houses. Each core house carries an average of ten persons, a figure which is usually inflated due to the extended family system. The inner core house is composed of a man, usually the father or an eldest member, followed by mother, sons and daughters. A core house functions

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structure which the Portuguese could manipulate for their benefit. If anything, Wehale kingdom was probably commercially influential in the sandalwood trade but not more than an intermediary between the Chinese and the more immediate Timorese kingdoms.

[15] While 'cult-based' group agglomeration is no longer the case in the current situation of East Timor, due to the forces of invasion and occupation, the concept still remains important, when it comes to tracing one's lineage and/or ancestor in today's village-based system.

as an economic unit, where the survival of the family members is a constant worry and dominates all other activities[16].

Elder suco heads have little influence apart from settling minor household disputes, when a head of household is unable to find a solution to a domestic dispute. Suco leaders, in turn, are directly answerable to 'dato suco' or 'liurai'. Dato Suco is the maximum authority or the petty king in the village power structure. He enjoys a great degree of social status and prestige among his subjects whose submissive and passive attitude characterize a power relationship, which as Jolliffe has pointed out, is comparable to the 'feudal regimes of medieval Europe' (Jolliffe 1978:102).. He oversees all the political and legal aspects of the village life. His authority is conferred to him through inheritance by virtue of his 'blue blood', the only way of legitimizing his otherwise informal power which normally goes unchallenged.

The village as such was a close social, political and economic unit that hardly needed the intervention of the Portuguese colonial authority. Therefore it must be emphasized that the traditional power base of petty kingdoms was hardly affected by the Portuguese colonial power structure of indirect rule. On the contrary, it was manipulated and further developed by Portuguese officers for the sake of 'pacification', taxation and recruitment of human labour.

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[16] In a household setting the division of labour between the genders is ambiguous. Roles and functions of both male and female often overlap and interchange in any kind of activity depending on the pressure a job needs to be done. Normally when the line of division is drawn it is done so on a principle determined by physical requirements.

1.6 Subsistence economy

The subsistence economy of Bucoli resembles the island's varied climatic conditions and the precarious ecological factors which I have previously discussed. The local people practise two main agricultural methods: 1) The swidden plantation and 2) the wet-rice agriculture. The former, also known as slash-and-burn cultivation, is an agricultural system characterized by the clearing and burning of existing vegetation before the cultivation is carried out. Under this practice, corn is the major grain while minor crops like cassava, beans, yam, pumpkins and sweet potatoes and tapioca are normally planted either in between or on the sides of corn fields.

The cultivation cycle is seasonal, that is, after the harvest has been collected, the cultivated plot is left to lie fallow for a period of some five months, depending on the availability of land and the duration of the variable dry season. Needless to say, the cultivation of grains and harvest of crops are carried out only once annually and typically of upland cultivation where irrigation entirely relies upon rainfall.

The latter is a wet-land cultivation of rice carried out during the rainy season. Where both flat and elevated areas are used for this particular practice, the elevated areas need a good irrigation system for support in times of rainfall shortage. Once the harvest has been collected, normally towards the end of the rainy season (May), the same land is prepared for dry season cultivation of corn and minor crops such as sweet potato and beans (June - October). This is carried out after a good burn of an excessive amount of dry vegetation which normally serves two purposes: first to help dry up the soil after wet-rice cultivation; and second, to help the soil regain its natural fertility[17].

Cultivation during this period is possible due to the abundance of all year spring-water refilled during the rainy season, and more than sufficient to be used for irrigation and household need throughout the year. Hence there are three harvests per annum in places where wet-land and upland cultivation can be practised rotate in addition to slash-and-burn agriculture throughout the space of twelve months.

In conclusion, the agricultural cycle depends on the place and year, and a good harvest is usually determined by a good rainy season[18]. Despite the precarious conditions found on the island, East Timorese peasants had developed techniques well-suited to their ecology. The degree of inventiveness and creativity shown in the intercropping system practised by Bucoli farmers is, at best, an illustration of agricultural strategy reflective of a great many farmers throughout eastern areas of East Timor. There was no assistance whatsoever on the part of colonial officers to introduce or improve existing traditional irrigations or methods of cultivation.[19]

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[17] Burning is a valuable source of fertilizing the soil. It releases phosphorous which is usually deficient in tropical areas especially after a good rainy season. A good burn normally means a good harvest, and abundant ashes often secure high yields. See Boserup (1965) and Gourou (1961) for more details on how shifting cultivators regain the soil its natural fertility.

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[18] See Friedberg (1980) in **The Flow of Life** for some insight into aspects of agricultural activities and rituals of the Bunaq of Central Timor for comparison.

[19] It is often said that colonialism and imperialism had made possible the incorporation of colonies into the world economy. Where this was the case, it was done so for the very purpose of maintaining the capitalist system at home, as a number of thinkers, most notably the Marxists have argued. The Marxist contention is often illustrated by the fact that in the colonial period the periphery underwent a commercialisation strongly dependent upon external trade which made it difficult for the indigenous peoples to have any control over the use of their labour power.

In the case of East Timor this was true to the extent that local labour and local natural resources were deflected into primary production of commodities such as coffee, coconut and copra for export. Needless to say, the main beneficiaries of this was the Portuguese, Chinese and plantation owners themselves. Indigenous cultivators hardly benefited, on the contrary they became displaced, as such giant projects required large space of land to operate. There was no attempt on the part of colonial government at using local natural resources to manufacture goods and to produce food for local consumption.

An intensive form of agriculture executed through 'technological package' of high tech-irrigation and mechanized cultivation was only introduced in the second half of the twentieth century by, not colonial officers, but Catholic missionaries in limited places like Baucau, Lospalos and Maliana. This proved to be of great advantage to a wide range of population in the respective areas.

Hunting-gathering is regarded as a recreation, although in places where the harvest fails to meet the needs and expectations, it is practised as a form of supplementary economic activity. Game animals largely consist of deer, wild pig and wild buffalo. But they are increasingly becoming very scarce due to war activity which has been going on since 1975. Gathering largely involves mushrooms and nuts.

1.7 Marriage and Exchange

The concept of marriage and exchange is largely used interchangeably by many authors when studying Eastern Indonesian societies. Although theoretically, the basic tenets of marriage and exchange are parallel, in practice their fundamental principles and aims are different. The former is understood as a vehicle for maintaining the continuity of the 'wife-takers' generation through establishing a new core house (or household). Therefore, any marriage related exchange items are largely carefully selected things (animal and objects) with social and cultural symbolic meanings and functions that go beyond there material importance. Water-buffalo, horse, sword, necklace provide an apt illustration. In the process new alliance is established and existing old ones are renewed between the concerned members.

The basic concept of the latter, like in the modern concept, refers to the forthright mechanism of establishing and maintaining relationships between individuals, groups and nations with common interests regardless of who gets what, when and where (Mair 1972; Lewis 1985). Exchange items here can be anything that has utility, without necessarily being a symbolic object with sacred meanings. The key-phrase, however, is 'common interests'. An established exchange relationship often implies good conditions for fostering political, social and economic interests of a network of individuals or governments in different situations and at different levels.

The interaction between marriage and exchange, as defined above, is undeniably factual, but much significance attached to the latter as a necessary condition for the marriage alliance to take place, has somehow transposed the true concept of marriage into a business-like exchange in which women are seen as simple items of transaction. Yet 'wife-givers' and 'wife-takers', while they have become acceptable as the standard anthropological jargon, are most unfortunate terminologies that have helped to project a concept which is, after all, not regionally true in space and time throughout Eastern Indonesian societies, or at least not so in East Timor. However, since there are different typologies of exchange, I should restrict my argument to the marriage associated exchange which is often termed as 'bride-wealth' or 'marriage payment'.

1.8 The Bucoli Case

The concept of marriage associated exchange does not bear a strict sense of marriage payment. To borrow Mauss's ideas, it is a distinct exchanging process between gift and reciprocity where goods exchanged have a moral dimension, giving the parties involved an identity which is maintained through 'simultaneous intimacy and distance' (Mauss 1967:18).

Marriage is here understood as a long process of continuity for the survival of the individual and group genealogy. Cross-cousin marriage was still the practice in late 60s, but largely it was the case where tradition was strictly observed and family groups involved were relatively socially closed. On the whole, due to the Portuguese influence, marriage outside traditionally expected behaviour was widely practised.

Marriage related exchange items are valuable items with usually social and cultural significance. They range from ancient swords, necklaces, water-buffalos and cash on the part of 'wife-takers' to horses, 'nuro' (Uai Mua word for cloth) and furniture on the part of 'wife-givers'. The bride, often referred to as 'kai huno' or 'flower', assumes a new function as an agent proudly made to represent 'wife-takers' in traditional ceremonies such as marriage and burial rituals where and when the service of the two new family groups is required. The groom is regarded by 'wife-givers' as their new son and to whom the well-being of their daughter is fully entrusted.

In the understanding of Bucoli traditional order, 'bride wealth' like Mauss's concept of 'gift' has a dual function. First, through marriage, exchange items establish a new relationship of intimacy between the two family groups. A relationship in which a set of rights and obligations are established for the individual and groups to perform throughout the course of their existence. This set of rights pertains to regulating who does what, who gives what and who receives what on occasions of marriage, mortuary rituals and other traditional exchanges. In the course of this social interaction involving material exchange a new identity emerges giving the two parties (wife-takers and wife-givers) a sense of solidarity and mutual assistance in both happy and difficult times.

On the other hand, however, once exchange of 'bride-wealth' has been concluded there is a prevailing psychological effect at work in the relationship keeping both sides at a certain distance. This emotional effect may be best described as a by-product of both successful and unsuccessful exchange. In the case of the former the situation is one in which both have either fulfilled the terms of contract initially agreed upon, or it can be a case whereby 'wife-takers' deliberately, and normally with a hidden agenda, give more than what is required. When excessive gift is the case 'wife-givers' are psychologically under pressure of some kind of inferiority complex. But when gift-giving and gift-receiving are played by the rule, both mutually acknowledge each other's authority at an equal level of respect.

Unsuccessful exchange occurs when 'wife-takers' fail to fulfil the terms of agreement and delay the fulfilment of exchange. In this case it is the 'wife-givers' who have a psychological advantage over 'wife-takers'. In other words through marriage related exchange the psychological effects experienced are analogous to Mauss's analysis of 'gift-giving' and gift-receiving', that is to say, there is a simultaneous 'closeness' and 'distance' all in what one would define as a complementary opposition of two elements associated and yet opposed in one context relationship.[20]

In conclusion, it would be quite misleading to assume that the concept of marriage and marriage related exchange items are conceptually uniform throughout Eastern Indonesia. In our effort to comprehend any traditional system, one can not avoid dealing with ecology and history, for in a one-way direction, a set of ecological and historical conditions require a certain pattern of human social behaviour as it is illustrated by the Bucoli exchange system.

Chapter Two will deal with some historical aspects of Maritime Southeast Asia which due to its geographical proximity with East

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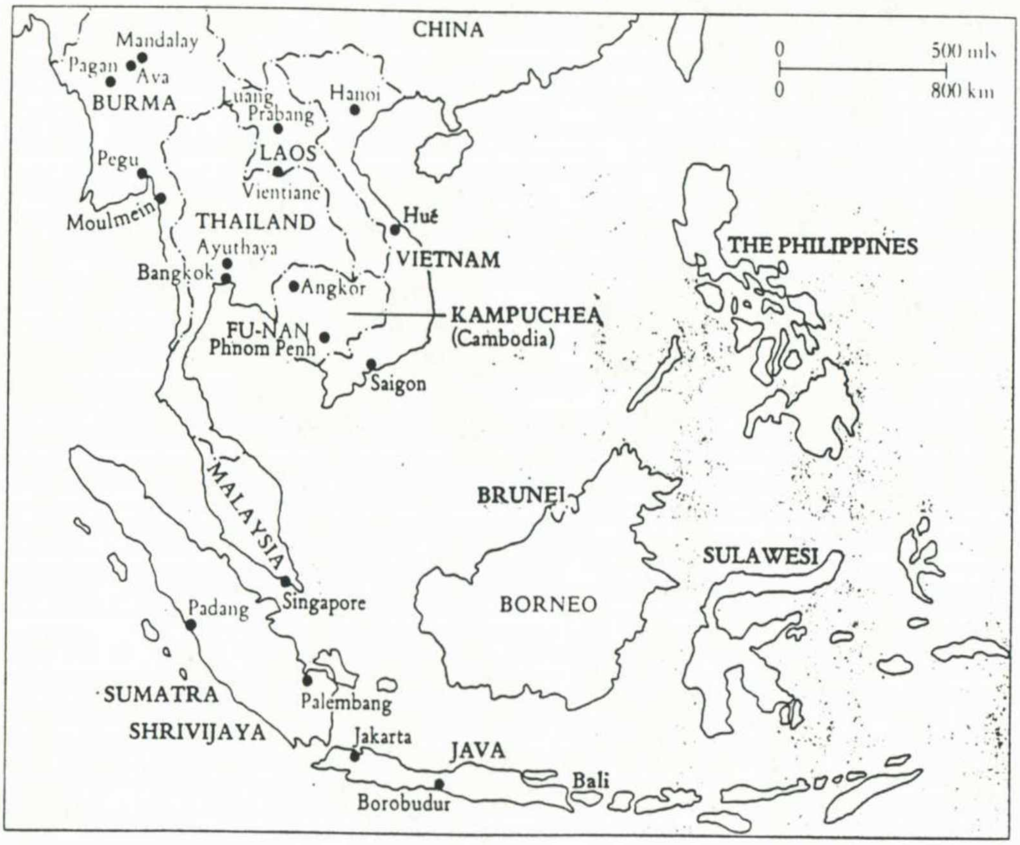
[20] This phenomenon would be more obvious in an ordinary gift-giving situation where parties involved use it for their own political advantage to outplay the other. In this situation 'gifts' as Lewis explains, are often synonymous with 'loans'. The difference between both 'is often arbitrary and imprecise [because] both imply debts' (Lewis 1985:197). In other words, in a gift relationship there is the political element which is often carefully manipulated by the giver to subjugate the receiver in order to achieve and maintain the former's political interests and social prestige.

Timor has been an important factor and essential in the understanding of East Timor both in their differences and similarities.


CHINA
0 500 mls
0 800 km
Mandalay
Pagan
Ava
BURMA
Luang Prabang
Hanoi
LAOS
Vientiane
Pegu
Moulmein
THAILAND
Ayuthaya
Bangkok
Hué
VIETNAM
THE PHILIPPINES
Angkor
KAMPUCHEA
(Cambodia)
FU-NAN
Phnom Penh
Saigon
MALAYSIA
BRUNEI
SULAWESI
Padang
Singapore
BORNEO
SUMATRA
Palembang
SHRIVIJAYA
Jakarta
JAVA
Bali
Borobudur

Map 6 Southeast Asia

Source: Smart (1989:150)

CHAPTER TWO

MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Introduction

The term Maritime Southeast Asia is relatively new and it will be used here in a more restricted sense to refer to the modern nations of Indonesia and the Philippines, which, as Steinberg has argued, as early as two centuries ago still consisted of "innumerable small stateless societies ...[but whose strategic locations have made them] interacted with a greater variety of external cultures for a longer period of time than has any other area of the world (Steinberg 1971:3).

As individual countries, as far as their cultural aspects and social structures are concerned, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but under the term Maritime Southeast Asia they will be alluded to, only, in so far as their exposure to outside influence is concerned. In historical times, long before the arrival of the Europeans, the region had already been a meeting point for various people of different nations, races and cultures originated in places like India, China, mainland Southeast Asia and the Middle East[1] (Wagner 1957; Taylor & Aragon

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[1] The main focus of attraction was the islands' popular spices and rice. The list of items ranged from slaves to gold including pepper, camphor, silk, benzoin, honey, wax, pitch, sulphur, iron, cotton, rattan, rice, and other foodstuffs, tamarind, areca, nutmeg, clove, mace, rosewater, semi-precious stones, diamonds and sandalwood (Ricklefs 1981:19).

1991; Ricklefs 1981; Barbier & Newton 1988; Rodgers 1985).

The Europeans, in a top down list of chronological order, the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British and French, like the Indians, Arabs and Chinese, also came here for the same motivations (spices and silk). But unlike the Asians and Arabs, the Europeans, (at least the Portuguese, the pioneers of overseas expeditions), had an extra objective, that is, to serve the Crown and God..

2.1 Geographical Definition

Maritime Southeast Asia may be defined as the group of islands which lie to the south of mainland southeast Asia,[2] comprising the islands of the Philippines and Indonesia.[3] The two countries together are made of 20,767 islands with a land area of 2,206,608 square kilometres[4]. Both Indonesia and the Philippines have been inhabited for a million years. The island of Java, for instance, is the site for remains of Homo erectus dating back to the Middle Pleistocene (Rodgers 1985:31). In Palawan, in southern Philippines, a 'skull cap' believed to be of a human skeleton was discovered in 1962 indicating that at least the Philippines was inhabited as early as 21,000 or 22,000 years ago (Agoncillo and Guerrero 1977).

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[2] Maritime Southeast Asia, also known as Island Southeast Asia, is defined here in the strictest geographical sense. In a broader definition it is part of what is now Southeast Asia which encompasses the whole region stretching from the Indian Ocean in the west, embracing the seven modern nation-states which currently make up the Association of southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to include Indochina to the northeast. See map p.38.

[3] Malaysia which is also part of MSEA will not be included here for the sake of space.

[4] The modern nation of Indonesia is today made up of 13,667 islands with some 300 ethnic groups spreading throughout 1,906,240 square kilometres of land area. The Philippines is also an archipelago of some 7,100 islands, with at least 75 ethnic groups covering a total land area of 300,440 square kilometres For a more detailed discussion on the resemblance between the two countries in terms of diversity, see Rodgers (1985:29-35).

The islands are mountainous and of volcanic origin. They lie either within or close to the Pacific seismic belt, and hence there have been some frequent earthquakes. The climate is characteristically tropical monsoon with high rainfall and lush equatorial vegetation, or semi-tropical with well-defined wet/dry season and open savannah depending on the place and time of the year. Despite the ruggedness of the landscape, both have irregular coastlines that generate some excellent natural harbours (Taylor & Aragon 1991; Agoncillo & Guerrero 1977; Rodgers 1985).

The highland and lowland pattern of ecological formation can be taken as one of the striking ecological resemblance between the two countries. The former (highland areas) is usually covered with dense forests, only to be interrupted with either well maintained terraces of cultivated rice or slash-and-burn plots. The latter (lowland areas) is made up of river valleys and fertile volcanic belts; it is normally the site of extensive cultivated paddy-fields. The pattern of human settlement, thus, has been determined by and developed according to the two ecological distributions. Hence, on the one hand, the lowland population of wet-rice cultivation, and on the other, the hinterland society of slash-and-burn cultivation (Steinberg 1971:6). Needles to say, both societies (lowland and upland) exhibit differing social relations and social organizations which are, so to speak, the products of the conditions required in the course of their interaction with their environment, that, in turn, are also influenced by their intercourse with the outside world.

2.2 From Lapita to European Influence

The islanders of MSEA are also known as sailors and traders par excellence (Barbier & Newton 1988; Taylor & Aragon 1991). In the course of their long history their social and cultural values had interacted and permeated as the result of both inter-islands trade and contact with external peoples previously mentioned.

2.3 Lapita's Influence. The history and origins of inter-island trade can now be established by an archaeological discovery in 1917 on the west coast of New Caledonia.[5] The discovery shows that there had existed an earlier pottery used in the ancient inter-island trade. This discovery also indicates that there is a prehistoric indigenous culture, now known as the Lapita,[6] which emerged about 2000 B.C. and flourished until 500 B.C. (Barrier & Newton 1988:13-15). As such it clearly antedates any external civilizations (Dong-son, Indian and European) in the formation and influence of local material culture.

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[5] See Map 5, p.21.

[6] The name is adopted after the site of excavation on the west coast of New Caledonia.

The exact origins of the Lapita culture remain mysterious, but there is strong evidence that the Lapita population were speakers of Austronesian languages from the Bismarck archipelago and highly likely that they were the founding culture of Melanesia and Polynesia (Newton 1988:10-23). A ceramic using culture, Lapita pottery is unique for its striking feature of a dense decoration in horizontal patterns. Motifs and representation are essentially geometric and they originally appeared on pottery and obsidian which spread throughout the region and as far west as Sumatra.

2.4 The Dong-son's Influence. The traditional material culture has also been greatly influenced by the Dong-son culture. It is a bronze-using civilization which probably developed in the sixth Century B.C. in the Tonkin region of Indochina, and lasted for some five hundred years (see Taylor and Aragon 1991:64; Wagner 1959:35). Its products were, amongst others, bronze axes, daggers and drums, all of which were beautifully decorated with representative designs of boats and scenes of death rituals.

The main characteristic features of Dong-sonian style are its symmetrical composition both in design and detail. Decoration of objects is accentuated by the geometrical segmentation of "key-shaped" figures in combination with "human and animal" figures forming a pattern which is regularly varied and repeated (Wagner 1959:37; Taylor and Aragon 1991:62). This style of decorative art is most common throughout the archipelago, with the exception of perhaps Java, Bali and Madura where Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism were very influential.

2.5 The Hindu-Buddhist Influence. Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced by Indian traders whose contact with mainland southeast Asia may be traced back to the second and third centuries C.E., though in Maritime Southeast Asia proper it did not begin until four centuries later (Smart 1989). Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced in the combined form of Indian Hindu-Buddhist ideas. It was first embraced by the rulers of the kingdom of Srivijaya-Palembang in South Sumatra, which was then the main entrepot in the region in the seventh century. It spread southwards through trade routes which linked India with China.[7]

On the island of Java, amongst the small 'wet-rice' royal courts, the ruling family found Indian cultural forms very attractive and quickly adapted Hindu-Buddhist symbols and ideas to home-grown religious beliefs to justify their political rule (Rodgers 1985; Smart 1989). Smart argues that, since there were already indigenous kingdoms forming themselves throughout the region, contact with India provided these smaller kingdoms, on their way to the creation of empires, with a model of ideology and theory of rule which was greatly attractive. On this basis, he proceeds to say, it appears that 'conversion' to Hindu-Buddhism in Southeast Asia in general was:

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[7] Trade contact with China became established most probably after the fifth century A.D. (for reference see Rodgers 1985:32 and Smart 1989:149).

> ... a religious and ideological one, in which a new theory of rule was deliberately imported to consolidate the power of local princes and empires. All this was superimposed on a basis of the mingled agricultural religious practices of the various indigenous peoples, who were now being organized by political means into more formidable wealth-producing units through the creation of irrigation schemes to enhance wet rice cultivation on a grander scale (Smart 1989:151).

Eventually, local Javanese courts became Indianized to the extent that state-power became centralized and "the king was thought to rule by divine right and his place and state were considered to be miniature versions of the cosmos as a whole" (Rodgers 1985:33).

The period between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a substantial interplay between local religious belief and Hindu-Buddhist ideas that eventually led to the formation of formal religious systems and hierarchies that successfully bridged the power distance between the village and the court.[8] The end product of this is the continuing growth and dissemination of a culture that has become 'vernacular and popular' (Steinberg 1971:37).

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[8] An example of this is the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit, (AD 1294-1453), which became a centralised state and very influential until the advent of Islam as an established religion in the region. See Ricklefs (1981) for more details.

In contemporary Indonesia, the monumental Borobudur and other beautifully decorated Hindu-Buddhist temples throughout Java, Bali and Madura, testify to the successful adaptation of Indian religious ideas, architecture and artforms. Such massive buildings also demonstrate the organizing skills of local rulers to provide both manpower and means for the construction of such massive work of art (Rodgers 1985). The decline of the Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit empire in the early fifteenth century coincided with the rise of the Islamic kingdom of Malacca in the western archipelago.[9]

2.6 **The Muslim Influence**. Although Muslim traders from north India and the Arab world had already been present in northern part of Sumatra for centuries, the Islamization of Java, Borneo, Sulawesi and parts of the southern Philippines did not begin until Malacca[10] gained its prominence as an Islamic state in the fifteenth century (Smart 1989:155).

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[9] The collapse of the kingdom of Srivijaya-Palembang as the main entrepot, during the period seventh-tenth centuries AD, had now placed Malacca as the most important trading centre in the region and the main meeting point for Muslim traders.

[10] Malacca, located in the western archipelago (in what is now Malaysia) deserves especial mention here, because although it did not have any significant trading products of its own, due to its strategic location, it soon became a very successful market place, and a port of call for all ships passing through the straits from and to China, Moluccas, East Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Although the exact genesis of this trading state is yet to be established, it is reasonably accepted that the kingdom of Malacca was founded sometime between 1400-1403, by Parameshwara, a Javanese nobleman and ruler of Palembang (southern Sumatra), who took refuge in Singapore after having fled the civil war which took place towards the end of Hayam Wuruk's reign in about 1370s AD (Teixeira 1961:9-31; Ricklefs 1981:17-19).

Biernatzki, pointing to Meilink-Roelofsz (1962), has argued that despite early Islamic influences it was not until the arrival of Muslim Gujarati[11] traders 'near the beginning of the fifteenth century' that a systematic penetration of Islam began (Biernatzki 1991:70). In spite of being a religious latecomer, Islam took over the reign of Hindu-Buddhism as both religious faith and model ideology for rule in the following two centuries. This extensive Islamization of the islanders seems to have its explanation in the syncretised and egalitarian aspect of the particular form of Islam introduced in MSEA as opposed to the hierarchical features of Hindu-Buddhism to which I have already referred.

The imported form of Islam was already Indianized and on the arrival was further blended with local motifs[12] (Smart 1989:159; Biernatzki 1991:70). Yet, unlike Hindu-Buddhism which was largely associated with members of ruling elites of Javanese Indianized courts, convert adherents of Islam were by and large,

> ...illiterate merchants instructed in the faith by other merchants who were equally illiterate. ...The most attractive characteristics of Islam...may have been its egalitarianism, which put all men, merchants, nobles, farmers, warriors and beggars, on an equal footing before the One God and His law. Contrasting as

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[11] The Gujaratis, according to Biernatzki (1991)were a mixture of traders and sailors from southwestern Asia and Eastern Europe.

[12] The form of Islam which is practised throughout MSEA today, is either orthodox or syncretic, known in the contemporary Indonesia as 'abangan' and 'santri' respectively. The former, also known as 'abangan' is characterized by an idiosyncratic blend of indigenous, Hindu-Buddhist, and Sufi mysticism, whereas the latter, which is also referred to as 'santri' is a pure form of Islam.

> it did with the stylized hierarchialism of the dominant nobility and their culture, this openness offered possibilities for upward mobility which must have had great appeal for the profit-oriented Indonesian merchant class. This group may also have felt greater affinity with other merchants, from whatever nation, than with other classes in their own land (Biernatzki 1991:70-71).

The introduction of Indian silk and the 'patola cloth'[13] by Muslim traders became very influential in the weaving activities throughout the archipelago and, in particular, on the outer islands. It must be said, however, that the adaptation of foreign artistic styles was more to complement and to enrich traditional motifs rather than to destroy them, leaving the pure form of local artwork almost untouched (see Barnes 1992 and 1991). For example, despite the Islamic proscription against figurative representation of living things (animal, plants and human beings) many Maritime Southeast Asian societies still depict, though surreptitiously, animal and human symbols in textiles (see also Biernatzki 1991:69).

2.7 The European Influence. In the history of Medieval Iberian Peninsula there is a long hostility between followers of the Christian faith and those of the Prophet Mohamet. The turning point in the history of Medieval Europe came about with the capture of the Moorish stronghold of Ceuta by the Portuguese in 1415 (Hall 1968:239). In the eyes of the Pope the victory was seen as a victory of Christians over Muslims. This prompted the issue of several Papal Bulls to legitimize, so to speak, the long crusade of Christians against the Saracens, or the 'unbelievers'

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[13] Indian cloth with a double-ikat patterned style.

(Boxer 1969:20). Of these the Bulls, **Dum diversas** and **Romanus Pontifex** are worth mentioning since they helped to launch the Portuguese into an adventure which soon overran the religious motivation and was transposed into economic, political and strategic interests. The Bull, **Dum diversas**, was issued on 18 June 1452 to give the King of Portugal the rights

> to attack, conquer and subdue Saracens, pagans, and other unbelievers who where inimical to Christ; to capture their goods and their territories; to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to transfer their lands and properties to the King of Portugal and their successors (Boxer 1969:21).

The Bull, **Romanus Pontifex,** circulated on 8 January 1455 is best described, as Boxer has called it, 'the charter of Portuguese imperialism' (Boxer 1969:22). This Bull not only reiterated the terms of the **Dum diversas** but it clearly restated and extended the rights of the Europeans to conquer and to convert infidels in the regions stretching beyond Morocco, establishing "guidelines for subsequent European behaviour (or misbehaviour) in the Tropical World [giving birth to what is known today as the Age of Exploration]" (Boxer 1969:21-23).

The experience of successive victories over the Moors and new discoveries in the Atlantic ocean gave the Portuguese a new taste of both material wealth and a feeling of supremacy. Crusading zeal, the chief motivation of early expeditions, had now begun to compete with the economic, political and strategic interests. Although it was possible to serve God and Mammon at the same time, soon the overriding considerations of commerce and colonization had overshadowed the medieval crusading ideal. And by the time they rounded the Cape of Good Hope, their main objective seems now to have been chiefly the control over the Spice trade of the East which was the main source of revenue of the Ottoman empire (Hall 1968:239).

Finally, in 1511 when they conquered Malacca, the main diffusion-centre of Islam and a well established port in the archipelago with international reputation, the Portuguese seemed to have finally accomplished the two objectives - to serve God and Mammon - in one effort (Hall 1968:240). Indeed, the Portuguese got more than they had bargained for. Boxer citing a Portuguese chronicle Suma Oriental (1515) by Tome Pires, claims that:

> No trading port as large as Malacca is known, nor anywhere they deal in such fine and highly prized merchandise. Goods from all over the East are found here; goods from all over the West are sold here. It is at the end of monsoons, where you find what you want, and sometimes more than you are looking for (Boxer 1969:42).

After the conquest of Malacca the Portuguese rapidly expanded their power and influence as the door was now widely open to the Spice Islands of Maluku. For the next hundred years Portugal became the main trading link between Europe and Asia. So much so that Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal, became known as the 'spice capital' of Europe (Drakakis-Smith 1992:25).

Whilst horizon for trade prospects became greater by the day, missionary enterprises became much more negligible. Quite apart from trade, the other main reason for the decline in missionary activities rested in the fact that Islam was already a well-established religion throughout most of the strategic maritime locations (Steinberg 1971:42). Attempts at Christianization of the locals were confined to the eastern part of the archipelago in which Muslim traders had no interest (Hall 1968:244). But even there Christianization did not start until the Portuguese began to be displaced in the western regions by the Dutch.

The Philippines was entirely a different case. Spanish seafarers headed by Magellan landed on the Philippines in 1521 and twenty-three years later (1564) they established their first settlement (Rodgers 1985:34). Like the Portuguese, the Spaniards were attracted to the region by the spices of Moluccas. Once in the Philippines, their objective was to make contacts with China and Japan for future missionary work (Hall 1968:249). However, this proved to be difficult for both countries had already adopted either Shinto and/or Confucianism as their religion. And their failure in gaining a share in the spice trade had now left them with only one task, which was to colonize 'the Philippines as an act of devotion' (Steinberg 1971:45). And since the influence of Islam only affected the southern parts of the Filipino archipelago, while the central and northern areas remained intact, this fact made the task of Spanish missionaries much easier and more successful than the Portuguese (Hall 1968:248:9).

On the basis of what has been discussed in this chapter, the following quotation from Geertz sums up nicely the true religious tradition of the people of Maritime Southeast Asia who in the course of their long history have adopted and professed, in addition to their natural belief, four world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity) in such a creative manner that has made their culture both vernacular and popular. The quotation reads:

> The religious tradition [of Maritime Southeast Asia], particularly of the peasantry, is a composite of Indian, Islamic, [Christian], and indigenous Southeast Asian elements. The rise of large, militaristic kingdoms in the inland rice basins in the early centuries of the Christian era was associated with the diffusion of Hinduist and Buddhist culture patterns to the island; the expansion of international maritime trade in the port cities of the northern coast in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was associated with the diffusion of Islamic patterns. Working their way into the peasant mass, these [three] world religions became fused with the underlying animistic traditions characteristic of the whole [MSEA] culture area. The result was a balanced syncretism of myth and ritual in which Hindu gods and goddesses, Moslem prophets and saints, [Christian god and saints], and local place spirits and demons all found a proper place (Geertz 1965:550).

The following chapter discusses, amongst other things, the adaptation of Christian values to natural indigenous elements more in the context of change and progress in life rather than religion per se.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURAL RELIGION AND THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER

3. Introduction

Portuguese colonialism marked an important milestone in the history of East Timor. It awakened the Timorese not only to the existence of a wider world system, but also to a colonial relationship shaped by a complex of superior versus inferior in the realms of material technology. In the course of colonial encounter, natural religions have generally survived due to the extremely slow pace of Portuguese colonisation.[1] In reality, however, the pace of natural religious practices became greatly influenced by the introduction of literacy, transport and hospitals, and this fact is apparent in the present syncretic forms of ritual practices.[2]

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[1] This was administered through policies of 'indirect rule', or the manipulation of existing traditional power structure, a policy resulted from the lack of colonial military power. As such the traditional power base was hardly affected, and needless to say the rural village system was almost untouched.

[2] Funerals and weddings are a good case in which both Christian and natural religious ceremonies are concurrently observed. A church wedding is normally preceded by symbolic blessings from the elder household head of both 'wife-givers' and 'wife-takers'. This is to guarantee the fecundity of the bride and the prosperity of their future household. Such tradition is normally observed by means of offerings to local spirits a way to purify the couple from past misfortunes.

Education and scientific explanations of natural events soon became the determining characteristics of change. Playing the leading role in education were the Portuguese missionaries whose programmes of literacy were directly part and parcel of efforts at christianization. But, for the Timorese, it was the economic-political power wielded by the colonialists and the magic of missionaries in providing answers and justifications to their immediate material needs that attracted them to literacy, and not the spiritual package which came with it. [3]

Nevertheless, in the process of interaction, cross-purposes simply resulted in a distinctive natural-organized syncretism in which Christian ideas have found a place in traditional rituals, and today it is rather difficult to speak of a pure practice of natural religion.

3.1 Bucoli's Concept of Natural Religion

If religion is to be simply understood in terms of a symbolic human relationship with nature, then for the Bucoli people religion is a part of daily life. In other words in our attempt at understanding the natural religion, one cannot avoid resorting to daily activities involved in the interaction of the villager with his/her environment. Generally speaking, the villager is a subsistence cultivator whose main preoccupation lies in the survival of the household in which he/she is and plays a part in the collective existence of the unit. By implication, it is almost a rule to establish and preserve an intimate relationship with nature.[4] And in this relationship agriculture can be described as playing the vital coupling role.

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[3] The religiosity of religion was too irrelevant and far beyond the indigenous comprehension which was mainly nature-oriented. This cleavage of motivations exemplifies the contradictory nature of the two religious principles (natural and organized) and the reasons behind subsequent conversions to Catholicism.

The life of the Bucoli villager is dominated with agricultural cycles which are normally initiated with ritual performances to ensure fertility of the soil and good harvest.[5] Rice being the main staple food, its cultivation is an agricultural main event in the village life. By definition, it follows that anything directly associated with the cultivation of wet rice (domestic buffaloes, soil and water) is highly valued and regarded as sacred. The following example describes how, through means of agricultural production, the religious is conceived, performed and renewed.

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[4] Nature here is broadly conceived to encompass both animate and inanimate objects that can be found in immediate surroundings.

[5] See Friedberg (1980) in **The Flow of Life** for analogous practices among the Bunaq of Central Timor.

3.2 Rituals of Wet Rice Cultivation

The important key-element in the cultivation of wet rice is the water buffalo.[6] Apart from human labour the farmer relies entirely upon domestic buffaloes for plowing the soil. Water is also crucial, but there are plenty of springs with enough running water throughout the year, provided there is a good rainfall during at least the first few months of the wet season which normally begins in either October or November. The fertility of the soil partly depends on the fertilizing substance the water carries and therefore the timing of the water is very important. To ensure that all the above conditions can be met rituals are performed during the first weeks of rain while the field is left to flood in order to tenderize the soil.

3.3 **Wasse Karabau Kele** or 'the washing of buffalo's paw'. This is the main ritual which involves at least three ceremonial stages before the actual cultivation of wet rice. The first stage normally takes place in the first week of rainfall. During this time a red rooster is sacrificed and its blood is offered to a spirit normally inhabiting a local water-spring. This is to ensure a good flow of water both in quantity and quality. The meat is then cooked and offered to the same spirit, while the leftover may be consumed by the older household head.

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[6] Domestic buffaloes also serve as sacrificial items and highly prized items of exchange, both marriage and trade related. Normally every buffalo has a name and is humanly treated. An extended family unit usually owns at least an average of five water buffaloes, and those who own more than the average are considered rich.

The second stage is the most crucial in these series of collective ceremonies. On the day before the plowing the herd of buffaloes is led to the nearby water stream for a good wash early in the dusk. This is a symbolic act of purifying the animals from contaminations before being led into the rice field to work the soil which, it is said, contains pure and fertile 'rea ta'i' or 'soil's wastes', the produces of mother earth's womb. On that day most members of the extended family gather and a few animals (goats or pigs) are sacrificed to observe the event. Blood and cooked food will be offered to local spirits while the rest is collectively consumed by the group.[7]

The final stage begins on the day after 'wasse karabau kele' when the buffaloes are led into the field to begin the plowing. This can take weeks of labour, depending on the number of buffaloes and men involved. A week before the actual sowing, a few bags[8] of rice seeds are taken to soak for the whole week to enable an easy germination. This range of ceremonies end on the day of sowing with a symbolic act of spitting chewed betel, lime and areca around the rice field. This is performed by the household head to expel bad spirits from the field.

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[7] It must be emphasized here that when the above rituals were observed in early 70s there was already a natural-Christian syncretism in which in addition to the natural rites the day would end with a gathering of the whole converted members in the household for the recitation of fifteen decades of Aves in the Christian tradition pleading the intervention of Our Lady to ensure a successful agricultural season.

[8] The number of bags is calculated according to the size of the field.

The above example at best describes not only the Bucoli conception of natural religion and its practices but also demonstrates the fact that ritual ceremonies are collective[9] practices, symbolic and social phenomena, inasmuch as they bring different household members together.

The Bucoli also perform rituals on different occasions and for very many other purposes. The rites of passage such as birth, marriage and death are all observed with ritual celebrations by means of sacrifices and offerings to ancestral beings.

3.4 The Ancestral Being

In a cluster-based hamlets,[10] there is normally a 'sacred house' or 'umo luli' where ritually produced objects[11] inherited from past ancestors are kept. Here regular offerings to ancestral beings are carried out by the elder or village head whose sacred rights are either inherited or acquired by virtue of old age.

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[9] Note that 'collective' here does not mean 'uniformity' in practice. It means that the diversified range of rituals when performed by different members of the group are seen as complementing rather than contradicting in the series of collective rituals.

[10] This is a particular situation whereby the group agglomeration is established around a cult site.

[11] It should be noted that by sacred objects, the Bucoli mean carefully selected objects that should be understood as representational objects encoding meanings that go beyond their physical aspects to bear a symbolic and explanatory ritual value. They range from stone to relics like 'beu' or swords, 'nuro' or cloths, golden/silver coins and necklaces, and ancient Portuguese flags, and all of which were once owned and used by ancestors for different purposes.

The ancestral being is understood as 'spirits' of persons who had departed since time immemorial, but through ritual performances they become very much part and parcel of the village life. They are regarded as intermediary between other powerful 'spirits' and humankind. These unidentified spirits are both good and bad spirits, and the villager believes that good and bad fortunes are normally the work of such spirits. This is simply interpreted as awards and punishments for human behaviour on this earth.[12]

3.5 The Complementarity of Opposites

The Bucoli distinguish three main layers of realities: The spirits (good/bad), human beings (male/female; older/younger) and ancestral beings (the intermediaries between spirits and human beings). In this way the cosmos is viewed as a totality balanced between contrasting but complementary elements which are essential for the functioning of a society. This system of complementary opposites, also known as binary opposition, is apparent in most of religious belief and practices throughout

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[12] Note that unlike the Christian view of religious salvation, award here means good harvest, good hunting, and good health, that is, all that is understood as part and parcel of the conception of the good life. Whereas punishment is viewed in terms of poor harvest, sickness, sudden death, natural catastrophes or human-made disasters as results of wrongdoing.

East Timor.[13]

The differences are more in the local variations of symbols and interpretations of meanings depending on the cultural values of each group.[14] These variations are noticeable in artistic productions as most of the themes depicted on artwork are largely mythologically related.

3.6 The Artistic Production

Like in any small-scale society, art in the Bucoli tradition is far from simply creating new forms through painting, sculpture, photography and video as one would normally understand it in the western tradition. In simple societies art is above all an interplay between the aesthetic and the sacred or the artistic and the religious - that is, an interplay which is heavily focused on the relationship between the present and past (Morphy 1991 and 1989).

Thus artistic themes are normally concerned with ancient traditions and long standing myths. In this context the representational aspect of art is meant to be understood, but in order to understand one needs a fair amount of knowledge of the society in question. In the absence of this knowledge, however, our understanding can be limited to the art object itself while its actual meaning is overlooked. In the case of the Bucoli my discussion of art will be limited to one specific artistic production namely 'nuro' or traditional cloth. The reason being that nuro is an artwork highly valued and essential in the functioning of the community.

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[13] See for example Traube (1980) 'Mambai Rituals of Black and White' (p.290) for a comparative analysis.

[14] See also Hicks (1988) for similar details on the tradition of the Tetum people.

3.7 The Bucoli 'Nuro'

Textile weaving has been a long standing tradition. In the tradition of the Bucoli weaving is the work of female. It is a manual job and time consuming. The production of a cloth alone can take a few months of work depending on the conditions required for its production.[15]

The introduction of Indian silk textile and double-ikat patterned patola cloth throughout Maritime Southeast Asia in the fifteenth century, as discussed in the previous chapter, also influenced the textile tradition of Bucoli. As a result, in terms of quality and designs, there are at least two types of cloths: The natural and the Indian affected version, respectively. The former is much less colourful in decoration and much more straightforward in terms of iconographic relationship. Local motifs such as ancient sword, animal figures (buffalo/horse) and human figures (male/female) are all depicted in a figurative combination forming a pattern which is regularly varied and repeated. And the representational meaning is evident, that is, the signifier and signified correspond naturally.

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[15] It also depends on how many hours a day the weaver spends on the job, which is normally done only after all other domestic duties of the day have been executed.

The latter, influenced by Indian tradition, is more dazzling with bright colours (red, black and orange). Flowers have become main motifs and designs, though human and animal figures are still depicted in a rather abstract way. When this is the case, the representative system is more complex. Flowers, human and animal figures all appear in one set of elements and depicted in such a way that it is not easy to tell the conveyed meaning.[16] This decorative style (abstract representation) is most common throughout the archipelago due to the influences of Islam which disapproves the natural representation of human and animal figures.[17]

In either case iconographic themes reflect the local view of the cosmos in terms of contrasting dualities (human/animal and male/female). And the depiction of these themes in cloths transforms the former into a symbolic object making it part and parcel of a complex system that conceals and reveals the ordering and functioning of the community with meanings that go beyond material significance.[18]

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[16] In some instances the themes are so enigmatic that their meanings may only be conveyed in the name ascribed to the style: Nuro Assukai and Nuro Anuata, that is 'male cloth' and 'female cloth'.

[17] See Barnes (1989) and (1992) for detailed information about textile tradition of eastern Indonesia.

3.8 The Encounter with Christianity

Charles Boxer noted that "if trade followed the flag in the British empire, the missionary was close behind the merchant in the Portuguese empire" (Boxer 1969:65). In the western parts of Maritime Southeast Asia, as I have already discussed, the Portuguese came across a well-developed trade network with a great range of commodities. As a result, missionaries and sailors alike became traders par excellence overnight, actively engaged in slave transaction, corruption and evasion of tax, that led them to neglect their services to the cross (Boxer 1969: 60-70).

East Timor had much less commercial significance. There were only two main trade items (sandalwood and slaves) and these were basically controlled and shared among the Chinese and Arabs.

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[18] Apart from serving to illustrate the major symbolic themes of village religious life (the creative union of opposites in systems of binary opposition) it also serves the following purposes and functions: When used as an item of exchange at marriage or funeral it becomes a vehicle for establishing and reinforcing bonds between the concerning individuals and groups. Symbolically it sets out certain obligations and rules to be observed by the two parties in the course of their alliance.

However, when given as a gift it can produce a psychological effect on the receiver, depending on the conditions and purposes under which this is carried out. For instance if the gift is exchanged between two rivals (individuals or groups) a good cloth both in quality and design can be an effective weapon for achieving hidden agendas on the part of the giver. The effects work in the same way I have previously discussed in my reference to bridewealth exchange. When worn, the cloth becomes a means of stressing the importance of the event, and this can be an official reception, or a gathering for a ritual celebration. But when worn by village elders, it is to show their position of social status.

Hence the early period of colonialism saw missionaries more involved in christianization, although simultaneously they played the crucial role of implementing and maintaining the colonial power structure.

In spite of all the challenges, missionaries were able to propagate Catholicism in a small scale and at an easy pace, and gradually it found a permanent place among the indigenous Timorese. Obviously there were variations of acceptance and rejection , and these may have varied with both local socio-political contexts in which Catholicism was understood, and with the double function played by missionary priests (secular/religious).

Two main periods or stages of missionary activities have been selected for the study of missionization in East Timor. The first period is from 1530-1940, while the second goes from 1940-1975.[19]

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[19] 1530 is the date of formal missionary settlement in East Timor. They were Franciscan Fathers and their numbers remain unknown. In September 1940 the diocese of Dili was formally founded and D. Jaime Garcia Goulart was appointed the first locally resided Apostolic Administrator. 1975 of course marks the end of old Portuguese colonial era and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

3.8a **First Period: 1530-1940**

In discussing the first period there are two main points that need to be emphasized: 1) the absence of Islamic influences, and 2) the association of Catholicism with the privileged class.

First and foremost, catholicism was possible in East Timor because of the absence of Islamic influences.[20] Although the island had been regularly visited by Indian Muslim traders long before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Muslim contact was just that, that is, it did not go beyond sandalwood trade. Islam and Christianity are similar in various important religious tenets. In addition to a common belief in religious salvation, both have extensive written sacred texts and share the same god with the same historical roots (Spencer 1971:7). As argued elsewhere, that where Islam was influential, proselytizing attempts by Portuguese missionaries met with strong resistance and had no hope of success (Hall 1968:243-245).[21]

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[20] As we have seen in the case of western Maritime Southeast Asia, with the presence of strong Muslim influences, Catholicism failed to make any real progress.

[21] This follows Lienhardt arguments that where and when two religions are similar, shifting in conversion from one to the other is difficult. See Lienhardt in Davies 1982 **Religious Organization and Religious Experience,** in which Lienhardt discussed some fundamental similarities between Dinka and Christian values - similarities which made it difficult for Christianity to advance among the Dinkas. He added that those few who converted did so for the sake of material achievement.

The second point is that Catholicism found reasonable acceptance because members of the ruling group were the first to embrace Christianity, a fact which usually led to the subsequent conversion of other members in their inner circle (Dunn 1983:17).[22] For example, according to Da Silva Rego in 1703 twenty five Timorese kings or 'liurais' (21 in the province of Belos and 4 in Serviao) had formally acknowledged the authority of the crown of Portugal over their kingdoms. In the same year twenty three Timorese liurais had appealed to the king of Portugal to lengthen the stay of governor Antonio Coelho Guerreiro whose relations with local kings was said to be quite amicable (Rego 1966:126).

It should be noted that during this period the missionaries were still very much on top of the colonial power structure, and by implication, both actions taken by the Timorese liurais, at best were an indication that, through conversion, the Timorese kings had become more politically motivated and ambitious. For them Catholicism had an instrumental value devoid of any metaphysical implication. Since, in their eyes, the missionaries were the colonial rulers with both economic and political power, in and through adopting Catholicism, the liurais simply viewed religion as a tool to acquire the same power in order to fortify their power base and legitimize their authority that otherwise was informal in this new political spectrum.

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[22] This is analogous to the pattern of conversion previously discussed with reference to Hindu-Buddhism, in which first adherents were the ruling members of the Javanese courts and their followers. See Chapter Two in this thesis.

Needless to say the association of Catholicism with secular power essentially led to power struggle between the Portuguese and Timorese liurais. In the long history of colonial Timor there are well-known intermittent wars (both inter-tribal and explicit protest movement)[23] with the involvement of all the three parties: the colonialists, the liurais and the commoners. It is not surprising that most of the existing literature on East Timor have explained these wars simply in terms of inter-tribal conflicts, thus basically following the colonial explanation (Boxer 1966; Dunn 1983; Jolliffe 1978 and Taylor 1992). Whilst this was partly true, the very motivations laid behind those conflicts were colonially associated and therefore, if anything, those wars were economically and politically oriented.

3.8b The Psychopaths[24]

Generally speaking, as recently as a decade ago scholars still found it almost unthinkable to entertain the idea that religion can play a true revolutionary role in societies striving for economic and political changes or simply struggling to get rid of foreign occupation (Lincoln 1985:5). Most views were then either reflective of Hobsbawm theory,[25] or the view, often taken by anthropologists, which simply ignored the political and economic dimensions of indigenous movements that had religious orientations.

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[23] On either occasions missionaries often misread the genuine rationality which layed behind action. Such strong opposition to Catholicism was oriented towards the economic and political power of the missionaries. Catholicism was not only associated with colonialism but Catholic priests themselves were true colonial rulers with both legislative and executive powers of a factual and effective government - that is to say, the priests had the power both to implement policies and to appoint and dismiss local governments when it suited their purposes.

[24] This is a translation by the author from the original in Portuguese '...a guerra **dos doidos**' (Rego 1966:346).

The following extract, very short as it is, exemplifies this typical dominant ideology, which views indigenous protest movements as simply 'primitive', 'irrational' and therefore 'rebellious' rather than 'revolutionary': On the Psychopaths, Rego writes:

> ...Of all the wars that occurred frequently during this period, [the war of] the **Psychopaths** which broke out suddenly during the government of Lourenco de Brito Correia (1779) distinguishes itself. It was led by a charming hallucinated leader who claimed not only to be invulnerable to Portuguese bullets, but also that such a privilege would become extendable to all those who would join him. The king of Luca immediately took advantage of this unexpected rebellion to achieve his objectives of local hegemony. The Psychopaths, bewitched by their leader, smashed and stole all they [could get hold of], and even the churches and chapels did not escape them. Sacred vestments were immediately used as amulets. This strange rebellion only ended in 1785 under the government of Jose Baptista Vieira Godinho. And what was the weapon that the most able governor used? The pure and simple invitation to the king of Luca, whose manipulations prior to the war of the Psychopaths were already well known, to occupy the position of lieutenant-General and governor of the province of Belos (Rego 1966:346-347).[26]

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[25] According to Lincoln, Hobsbawn argued that any indigenous movements with religious elements were simply equated with rebellious, irrational, and therefore suited only to 'primitive' societies, whose goals were not clearly defined and thus doomed to failure (Lincoln 1985:5);

[26] The original text is in Portuguese.

The above is all we know of the Psychopaths, but nevertheless the movement presents the same features as those of Melanesian Cargo Cults (Worsley 1957)[27] both in action on the part of the 'natives' and in response on the part of the colonizers.

In the case of the Psychopaths, the fact that the war only ended after the king of Luca was conceded the place of lieutenant-general justifies the political objective of the movement. The movement was not an opposition to Catholicism per se and neither was it a resistance to religious and cultural change. The element of resistance present in the movement was aimed at the secular, that is, the political and economic power of the Portuguese missionaries. Protest such as this would have developed into well organized political movements. They in fact did not because of the repressive methods used during campaigns of 'pacification and domestication' by the colonial ruler.

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[27] The war of the Psychopaths was short-lived, but like Cargo cults, it was promoted to reattest local identity and power base which were gradually shifted to the benefit of 'the white man' due to the infusion of colonial values.

Indigenous religious movements often are seen as proof of indigenous ritual forms of resistance to religious, social and cultural change. The most neglected fact, however, is that those movements were largely the results of European colonisation which meant land alienation, destruction of some aspects of indigenous social and cultural values, exploitation of economic resources, cheap supplies of unskilled labour, and domination by force (Worsley 1957).

The motivations (religious) are just the same way as early European millenarian movements operated during the Middle Ages. In Medieval Europe millenarian movements were a response to social and political injustice imposed by conditions of economic change (Cohn 1957). They were the vehicle for the lower classes of society and the dispossessed to promote their dissatisfaction with the unfavourable changes.

3.8c Second Period:1940-1975

The second period (1940-1975) can be roughly described as a stage of slow departure from the first period. It can also be described as a partial shift of Catholicism from its association with the privileged class to involve the rural commoners. Change in the modus operandi of missionaries towards a more clearly defined role was needed to remedy past mistakes. The nature of the change then had to be one which by definition was a clear-cut separation of the religious from the secular, but under the colonial conditions this radical change proved to be difficult. Nevertheless what was to emerge during this period was a 'positive' move as a result of the formal establishment of the diocese of Dili in September 1940.

The clergy made education its priority, moving away from the administration of colonial power, and established several Catholic schools throughout parishes, missions and missionary stations. These schools had two main functions 1) to christianize, which by implication meant 2) to civilize. In other words the skills of literacy and catechism were taught side by side since both were complementary and aimed at the preparation of children and adults for their first communion.

The new missionary approach gradually proved effective. The school soon proved to be the most dynamic vehicle for change. It was through schools that the children brought the white man's values into the structure of the traditional family. The magic of writing and reading, scientific explanations of illness, sudden death, rain and thunder all soon began to raise the interest of the villager, leading to an increase in desire on the part of villagers to have more of their children educated. In other words, of the two objectives (christianization and civilization) it was the latter that succeeded in raising further interest of the commoner.

However, it should be noted that civilisation here is to be strictly understood as the ability to read, write and speak the white man's language, which in the views of the commoner was a way of getting to share the knowledge and power of the white man.[28] Needless to say, it is well-known the kind of 'true' civilization or ideology propagated by any European colonial power through educational institutions. In most cases, as Lincoln has remarked,

> The ideology propagated by missions is a selective Christianity consciously adapted for colonial consumption, which regularly insists that salvation can be won only through faith in the Christian god as revealed in the Bible and explicated by missionaries. Colonial expansion is thus cast as an altruistic crusade, bringing hope of salvation to those otherwise

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[28] There was an apparent cross-purpose emerged, either conscious or unconsciously, between the missionaries and the indigenous. For the former christianization and civilization were not thought of as different aims. The skill of writing and reading would lead to the ability to read and to comprehend the Bible in order to fill the spiritual void. Whereas, for the latter literacy meant passage to the white man's mysterious material world full of knowledge and power.

The existing cleavage of interpretation, in my view, resulted partly from the way Christianity was introduced. For example the 'Catholicism' which was introduced to the indigenous Timorese was already a belief stained with corrupted practices of the missionaries themselves, who in the eyes of the indigenous were true traders and colonial rulers.

> irrevocably lost. To avail of that hope, however, colonized peoples must first acknowledge the superior knowledge and authority of Europeans, and adopt the ideals and behaviours they prescribe, abandoning traditional ones wherever necessary. Salvation is thus presented as an exclusive club, admission to which is European-controlled, non-Europeans being accepted only in so far as they become appropriately reformed and submissive (Lincoln 1985:272-3).

Nevertheless, as rural cultivators normally looked to colonial religious institutions for the improvement of their agricultural productions, I should turn my discussion to religion as a vehicle for rural change.

3.9 Rural Changes: The Unintended Consequences

So far what we have seen is a slow process of transformation in which religious rationalization has been playing the role of change. Through introduction of Catholicism unintended transformations in the social, political and economic realms took place. These changes had far greater importance on local systems than could have been known before the introduction of Catholicism. Rural people turned to the missionaries for basic needs in areas of health, education and transport. For the villager becoming a catholic was almost synonymous with acquiring social prestige. Because through conversion and baptism the individual adopts a christian name (Portuguese) which in turn entitles him/her to a Portuguese identity card, changing the whole 'nativist' identity of the individual. Needless to say, becoming a priest meant a good life, safe job and a guaranteed future.

Inasmuch as the commoner was concerned, conversion did not necessarily mean change of conviction. People adopted Christian values as simply useful complements. It was through this phenomenon of conversion that rural life changed. However, this does not mean that Catholicism by itself was a primary force of transformation. But it became the most energetic agent of change in and through the course of its interaction with local systems.

In the absence of either Hinduism or Islam, Christianity came into direct contact with traditional systems of the Timorese society in its rustic state. Changes which occurred due to the importation of Catholicism were piecemeal in nature but, above all they were direct transformations from a pristine rural society to a broader social and cultural colonial network.

An analogous situation is the African Christian encounter where in the absence of other world religions Christianity played the major role of change in the rural life. Ranger, in his analysis of the African situation, for example, argues that

> ...Peasants have used different types of Christianity for many different economic and social ends so that we need to understand the social history of rural Christianity in order to understand history of agrarian change. Nevertheless, although Christian ideas have often been allied with aspirant rural capitalism, ... in conclusion...Christian movement in Africa, [when] seen as a whole, has much more in common with the socialist transformation of peasant societies for which many African regimes are calling than those regimes or most Christian churches imagine (Ranger 1987:30).

Ranger, thus, establishes a conclusion that is very much reflective of not only the African situation but of most preliterate societies that came into first contact with European colonisation through Christianity. His final remarks are that 'anthropologists, who have been almost always uneasy about the alien character of the mission churches and their de-culturing effect on African societies, have found in the independent churches fascinating evidence of African cultural resilience' (Ibid:31).

In conclusion, the process of Christianization can only be properly understood when activities of missionaries and reactions to it are seen as part of a whole mechanism of rural change in economics and politics, rather than in terms of de-culturation or colonial opposition. This approach can also allow a fair assessment of acceptance, rejection and fusion of both the natural and organized religions. The following chapter discusses the role of religion in the period following the Indonesian invasion in December 1975.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

(MAY 1974-DECEMBER 1975)

4. Introduction

The Catholic clergy came into the 1970s with some reasons for optimism. In 1970 after 440 years (1530-1970) of intermittent christianization the Catholic Church claimed at least 196,861 converts out of a total population of some 628,842 (Baptista 1987:4).[1] The attempt of the colonial government at asserting itself as the final arbiter in the colony often met with embarrassment in the areas of education, transport and agriculture. Generally speaking East Timor as a colony could not have survived without the Catholic institution. For it was largely in Catholic missions that, at least, 'progress' and 'development' were encouraged, though, it was done so, largely for the benefit of colonial consumption. In so far as the colonial government was concerned, as Telkamp (1979) has argued, East Timor was a closing subsidiary item and a colony in name only.[2]

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[1] If conversion is to be understood simply as adaptation of some Christian ideas to local values in the achievement of vital human needs such as clothing, food, medicine and education, the numbers of converts would have certainly overrun that figure.

[2] To look at it another way, until 1975 East Timor was practically a colonial resort for political dissidents and war-worn soldiers, where issues of economic and political emancipation of the colony were non-existent. While during that same decade, the world had already witnessed more than one billion people who had undergone the transition from being

On the other hand, however, it must be noted that in setting out its priorities, the Catholic clergy seems to have neglected the fact that humanizing process can only be fulfilled in its totality, that is every sphere of human existence must be equally addressed, given that human activities are the product of both its religious and its secular relationships. The Church was carried out by Europeans for a privileged minority of non-European societies dominated by European colonial power. Hence it seems undeniable the contribution of the clergy towards maintaining, if not implementing, the system of colonial power structure. This may explain why there were never moves on the part of the colonial Church to confront exploitation and oppression as essentially evil institutions - a silence which was nonetheless quite reassuring to the colonial masters.

4.1 The End of an Era

On 25 April 1974 a group of young Portuguese military officers, mostly war-worn returnees from the then Portuguese African colonies, staged a coup d'etat that brought down the dictatorial regime of Salazar. They installed a democratic government in

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colonial subjects to becoming citizens of independent states. But, in most cases it was just that - the political emancipation. Because the incorporation of colonies into the world economy through European imperialism had already exhausted the productive power of newly independent states. And without economic deliverance, former European masters managed to retain old colonial status in a new relationship with only minor cosmetic changes.

favour of independence for overseas colonies. Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau which had a long history of liberation struggle gained immediate independence. East Timor for the time being had to be content with mere creation of two main political parties, the Uniao Democratica Timorense (UDT) and the Associaco Social Democratica Timorense (ASDT).[3]

ASDT or Fretilin, largely due to the charisma of its leaders, made early political advances among the masses throughout the island. Its political craft aimed, in particular, at the emancipation of the most oppressed strata, that is, rural cultivators and illiterate commoners who made up the majority of the population. On the other hand, the failure of UDT leaders to capitalize and catalyze latent discontents was generally due to the very lack of charismatic leadership, rather than of organizational skills or political substance as often argued (Jolliffe 1978; Dunn 1983; Taylor 1991). It should be noted that founders of both political associations were from the same social background - the middle class oppressed - with same colonial status and prestige acquired under the social rank of 'funcionario publico' (civil servants).

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[3] The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) was founded on 11 May 1974 to endorse the continuation of East Timor with Portugal for a limited period of time before an eventual independence in the future. ASDT, what is known today as Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor (FRETILIN) was formally instituted on 20 May 1974. It advocated a more radical approach demanding the implementation of independence within 3 to 10 years. A third party, APODETI, smallest in number, was founded later and opted for association with the Republic of Indonesia.

A detailed history of political developments leading up to Indonesian invasion and occupation is beyond the scope of this thesis, and it can be found in Taylor (1991), Dunn (1983) and Jolliffe (1978). In the interest of later discussions, however, I should briefly highlight the position and reaction of the local clergy during this countdown period[4] to the Indonesian invasion.

4.2 The Clergy: A Period of Decline?

The period 1974-1975 can be best described as a period of transition. During this phase East Timorese clergy was under the leadership of D. Jose Joaquim Ribeiro who was appointed Bishop, replacing his predecessor D. Jaime Goulart in February 1967. The period saw a dispirited people, just emerged out of colonial backwardness, representing all sections of East Timorese society, who were eagerly involved, for the first time, in the determination of their own future, which until then was jointly administered by the colonial officers and clergy as part and parcel of the colonial package. The colonial government, apart from its efforts at decolonization, was practically ineffective during this time. Its inaction reflected very much the socio-political and economic turmoil back in Portugal.

The position of the Church during the period of transition was as much ambiguous as the government, only for the former the future was full of uncertainties while for the latter it was reasonably clear that East Timor had to go its own way come what may. Indonesia, on the other hand, had stepped up its campaigns against Fretilin, a party, which according to the Indonesian government, was committed to Marxist-communist ideology.[5]

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[4] That is the period from May 1974 to December 1975.

Indeed, Fretilin's success largely stemmed from revolutionary programmes which were designed, and it must be emphasized here, to bring about social revolution, not in the Marxist sense but in ways peculiar to most colonial realities, that is, a revolution essentially devised to achieve the transition from colonial stagnation to at least political independence with awaiting programmes in place for social, cultural and economic reconstruction. This required intensive campaigns in rural areas, which formerly were the domain of Catholic priests in their efforts at evangelization.

Obviously for the Catholic church this was extremely worrying, but no official statements were issued. Reactions varied among sections of the clergy. The view of indigenous priests (13 in 1970), to a certain degree, was conditioned by family ties. As a result, there were sections (a) who supported the idea of self-determination advocated by Fretilin, (b) those who, like adherents of UDT, espoused the idea of continuing association with Portugal, and (c) some who found the idea of integration with Indonesia attractive. Whereas non-indigenous Timorese priests (29 in 1970)[6] were mostly supportive of UDT with the exception of Indian priests who were enthusiastic supporters of APODETI.

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[5] There is no evidence of this, apart from some members in the leadership of Fretilin (mainly Timorese born Lisbon-based students) known for their radical views characteristic of Third world liberation movements such as Frelimo (Mozambique), MPLA (Angola) with programmes of literacy distinctive of Paulo Freire's methodology (see note 8).

D. Jose Joaquim Ribeiro, the then Bishop of Timor, was not particularly well-honed with the idea of independence under Fretilin's rule. In fact in his sermons he often alluded to the existence of certain people who wanted to discredit the work of Catholic priests. In rural areas where Fretilin's base and missionary stations coexisted the relationship was an uneasy one. Bucoli is a good case in point.

4.3 The Case of Bucoli[7]

Bucoli was a testing ground for Fretilin's programmes of literacy and agriculture. In the sector of literacy, programmes of education were delivered in the true tradition of Freire's

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[6] They were mainly from Portugal, Spain, Italy, India, and Chinese from Macao.

[7] Bucoli like Aileu, (see map p.14) became the main testing ground for Fretilin's revolutionary programmes particularly in the fields of agriculture and literacy. Agricultural co-operatives were established with the main objective of manufacturing local goods and food production for local consumption. Its principle was basic and appealing to local peasants and farmers because it prioritised the long term sustainable survival of the community. This clearly stood to contradict the agricultural policies of the colonial government which either simply neglected local needs or deflected local natural resources into primary production for export.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed.[8] The keyword was 'consciencializacao' or 'conscientization', a term identified by Freire, and employed by Fretilin, to refer to the need for the oppressed to perceive their reality in a critically objective manner. That is to say, for the oppressed class liberation can only come about after they have recognized that they had been oppressed and exploited. Freire argues that,

> ...The struggle begins with men's recognition that they have been destroyed. Propaganda, management, manipulation - all arms of domination - cannot be the instruments of their rehumanization. The only effective instrument is a humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed. In a humanizing pedagogy the method ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers...can manipulate the students...because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves (Freire 1972:44).

The result was inevitably a mixture of optimism and confusion. Optimism because through the implementation of programmes above described there was creative and spontaneous reaction resulting from a true desire of the Bucoli to be liberated. Confusion in that what they had begun to rediscover as humane had now been in direct collision with the values of the colonizers whose 'consciousness' they had internalized. Freire acknowledges this as a 'tragic dilemma' and a painful phenomenon of 'duality' in which the oppressed have the choice 'between being wholly themselves or being divided'. The struggle for freedom by no means was an easy one.

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[8] Freire identifies two main notions of education: They are the "banking" concept of education and the libertarian or 'problem-posing' education. The former, a 'misguided system' negates both education and knowledge as processes of inquiry in order to serve the interests of the oppressors. The latter is a system designed to incite the oppressed to be conscious of their 'incompleteness' which in turn could instigate their need to come out of immobility and move in the process of transformation (Freire 1972:45-59).

4.4 Nationalism vs Religion: The Uneasy Relationship

The escalation of Fretilin's activities almost corresponded with the decline of missionary influence. Or to look at it another way the rise of East Timorese nationalism almost meant the decline of legitimate Church authority. The transition phase (1974-1975) was now very much comparable to the nineteenth-century Europe.[9] The period was increasingly becoming secular and nationalism alone was regarded as the revolutionary future. This essentially means, nationalism alone would provide East Timorese with the rationale to move forward and build their future - one which must be fully dissociated from the colonial past where the practices of colonial oppression must only be a reason for understanding more wisely the need to look ahead.

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[9] The late 19th century-Europe witnessed the rise of Nationalism as a threat to religion. As the age was increasingly becoming secular, religious past was regarded as romanticism and future as utopia. Religion, which until that time had provided the main conceptual basis for the understanding of human history, was now beginning to lose ground. The evolutionary theory elaborated by Darwin in his book **The Origin of Species** in the second half of the 19th century (1859) helped to speed up the decline of religion and the downfall of religious traditional authority. Darwin's theory strongly disagreed with the prevailing Judeo-Christian belief, by maintaining that history could be understood without centring God as the historical agent (Harris 1986:8; Goode 1951:19).

As a result, in many respects, Fretilin's nationalist aspirations clearly stood to oppose the interests of the clergy and its political opponents in a society where the privileged minority was still very much in control of the social fabric, and fear for radical change or reaction to Fretilin's programmes were more emotional than rationally oriented. The psychological war between nationalism and religion increasingly became much more real than apparent.

4.5 A View of Timorese Nationalism

Like religion, nationalism is a complex totality and not easy to define. In the colonial situation of Portuguese Timor one would have expected that natural religious paradigms would become essential elements in the course of nationalist transformation. For example Spencer argues that

> ...the traditional bases of religion often appear to be translated into the modern concepts of nationalism and to form the rationale for the existence of the nation-state (Spencer 1971:11).

Whilst this was not the case during the period of transition for reasons I will demonstrate below, suffice it to say that the Timorese Dualism, nevertheless, contributed in full to the adaptation of Catholicism as an indigenous belief, however paradoxical it may sound, that was to become a 'handmaiden' for nationalism in the later struggle against the Indonesian invasion and occupation.[10]

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[10] This is discussed more in detail in Chapter Five.

In the absence of indigenous paradigms, I therefore argue that nationalism which emerged during the period of transition was essentially characteristic of a bourgeois democratic aspiration. That is, it resulted from the collapse of Portuguese colonialism giving the educated minority the chance to assert themselves as trend-setters in the leap forward into modernism, an age where to be nationalists is to imitate the western, and to be like the western is to imitate the educated western. Needless to say, prior to the collapse of Portuguese colonialism the handful of western-educated Dili-based civil servants hardly had any contact with the realities of the rural masses.

In the colonial mentality 'education' just did not and could not coexist with 'ignorance' in space. The mentality of the middle class oppressed East Timorese resembled very much the rationale of the colonial ruler and for them their traditional roots were greeted with simple nostalgia. Thus, in so far as the past was concerned it was not 'religion' nor 'tradition' but the nature of colonialism itself that became the impetus in the race forward. To look at it another way, the link between the past and present was made possible by colonialism and not by paradigms of ancestral values.

In the understanding of Gellner, it is probably the implication of the sort of arguments examined above which might have prompted him to suggest that nations are the product of fabrication, or in other words, nationalism invents nations where they do not exist (Anderson 1983:15). The East Timorese nationalism by no means was an invention. It was and is a process of continuing transformation in which basic nationalist aspirations in striving for the formation of a modern nation-state are feasible and have tangible historical precedents.

The understanding of, nation, in this particular situation, then, must be conceived less in Gellner's 'fabrication' terms, and more in Anderson's tradition. The latter defines nation as:

> ...an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign ...imagined [because] the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 1983:15).

The keyword here is 'communion'. The colonial education helped the East Timorese to perceive that communion in a more assertive way[11] to suit their nationalist interests. Fretilin's rise to power and to prominence was indeed an end-result of colonialism, and as Fretilin's nationalism developed the legitimate religious authority waned. [12]

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[11] It must be noted that this was an unintended consequence of the colonial education policy and yet a most significant result for the East Timorese. Anderson's view is probably more in tune with the anthropological approach, in that all communities larger or small "are to be distinguished, not by their falsity or originality, but by the style in which they are imagined" (p.15). And the colonial education though reserved only for few privileged minority it provided just that, the unintended creative imagination of a nation.

[12] In the eyes of non-Fretilin supporters the party soon became associated with communism and at times both Fretilin and communism were used interchangeably. Fretilin leaders made no efforts to defuse the inaccurate view of the party's objectives. This was largely because neither Fretilin leaders nor the clergy had any good grasp of communism as an ideology per se. For the former, at best, 'communism' meant a fashionable word ascribed to revolutionary thinkers advocating radical changes. For the

The transition period reached its zenith against this background development and towards the end of 1975, it seems that East Timor was already predestined by the course of its externally imposed history.

4.6 Independence

Towards the end of 1975 it was obvious that most Timorese, regardless of their political convictions, found the idea of independence attractive. In the meantime, however, Indonesia was making the most of APODETI, its newly adopted political proxy, to destabilise the situation, by indicting Fretilin with communist tendencies. UDT unsatisfied with Fretilin's political achievement amongst the masses, and encouraged by Indonesia, staged a coup on 11 August 1975. This took Fretilin by surprise and drove the Portuguese governor and his entourage out of the mainland to take refuge on nearby Atauro isle.[13]

Two weeks of intensive fighting[14] led Fretilin to establish control over the territory. On 28 November 1975 Fretilin finally

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latter 'communism' simply meant that 'religion was the opium of the people', and therefore the most potential enemy of the Catholic Church. There were no efforts, on the part of the Catholic clergy, at understanding the true nature of party political programmes, and nor was there any sign of formal acknowledgement of the existence of political parties.

[13] See Map 1, p. 16.

[14] This political hiccup between Fretilin and UDT claimed the lives of at least some 1,500-2,000 East Timorese (see Waddingham et al 1980).

proclaimed the independence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor - a move taken under pressure due to the noncompliance of the Portuguese governor to return in order to resume the process of decolonization. But, the move was more tactical - it was a swift move carried out to hold back the encroaching Indonesian forces who were now in full combat position ready to invade Dili.

4.7 The Invasion

On 7 December 1975 Indonesia launched a full scale invasion by air and by sea on Dili, the capital city of East Timor.[15] The invasion had been expected for weeks but the ruthless nature of the attack took the people by surprise and shattered the population of Dili psychologically and physically as countless bodies began to fall (Boavida 1991). On 17 July 1976 Indonesia formally annexed the territory which to these days remains under its illegal military occupation.[16]

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[15] It should be noted that during the Portuguese colonial rule the Indonesian government had never laid claim to East Timor, which until 1975 had never come under the old Dutch colonial empire, and what is today known as Indonesia. Hence, the invasion was condemned by both the Security Council and the UN General Assembly as a violation of international law. Altogether ten UN resolutions have been passed calling upon the government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay its armed forces from the territory, and reiterated the rights of the people of East Timor to self-determination.

[16] East Timor seems at first sight to be a lost cause. Although the UN resolutions reflect the worldwide condemnation of Indonesian invasion, in practice, individual governments have adopted a quiet diplomacy. A more forthright approach towards the Indonesian government would put at stake too many important economic interests. Obviously, Indonesia's offensive was not only relegated to the military realm. Internationally, with its allies, it tried to denigrate the heroic and just struggle being

In November 1976, less than twelve months after the invasion, the Catholic clergy estimated that over 60,000 people had been killed. In 1985, ten years later, Amnesty International figured that at least as many as 200,000 East Timorese, that is one third of the population had died from the period 1975 to 1984.[17] On the other hand many others had fled and many more had been internally displaced. It is estimated that at least some 20,000 East Timorese have been resettled in Portugal and Australia (Thatcher 1992).

4.8 The Reaction of the Clergy

The initial reaction of the clergy, in the person of the then Bishop Jose Joaquim Ribeiro, was one of outright joy.[18] For Bishop Ribeiro, if anything, the invasion on 7 December 1975 was

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waged by the masses of the East Timorese people, representing all sections of East Timorese society. Indonesia set in motion a sophisticated machinery to promote disinformation about the occupation, and to subvert the International community's concern for the plight of the East Timorese. Gradually, in the opinion of the poorly informed general media and the wider audience, the highly coordinated collective resistance movement, both on the military and diplomatic fronts, became downgraded to a separatist movement carried out by a handful of guerrilla fighters in search of a break-away state from the Indonesian Republic.

[17] See amnesty International's report in **East Timor Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, Disappearances, Torture and Political Imprisonment, 1975-1984.**

[18] Most leaders of the three political associations, in particular Fretilin, had been students of either Catholic boarding school at Soibada or at the Catholic Seminary at Dare. Until 1975 the latter was run jointly by Diocesan and Jesuit Fathers, and by the educational standard at the time, it was the most privileged educational institution. Obviously, the Bishop was not particularly happy with Fretilin's political programmes.

a day of reckoning. The invading forces were greeted as true liberators who had come to rescue the East Timorese converts from the yoke of Fretilin's alleged communism.

On the other hand, six Catholic priests[19] had joined the majority of the population, taking refuge in the remote areas, which had now been under the control of Fretilin forces.[20] In the eastern part of the territory some priests were beaten and taken prisoners. Missionary stations and Catholic boarding schools (Fatumaca and Fuiloro) were made into military quarters. The Catholic seminary at Dare, the intellectual cradle for most of the East Timorese middle class oppressed, in particular the party leaders, was among the first buildings destroyed by Indonesia's sea bombardments. The situation was totally chaotic and with the departure of the Portuguese government as Walsh has argued:

> ...the Indonesian invasion in 1975 ... plunged the Church, in the starkest manner, into an altogether new and unfamiliar situation with which, after generations of political mollycoddling and isolation from the mainstream Church, it was uniquely ill-equipped to cope (Walsh 1982:12).

By now Bishop Ribeiro, most probably, had begun to wonder about the true nature and objective of Indonesia's liberating mission, but he had carefully chosen to remain silent well until his departure in 1977. As he left, the Vatican, for the first time, appointed an indigenous East Timorese, the late Mgr Martinho da Costa Lopes, to care for the Apostolic Administration of his own people. This in many ways was the turning point in the history of East Timor Church. The Diocese of Dili ceased at once to be dependent on the Portuguese Catholic Bishops Conference and became directly answerable to the Vatican, and it remains so to these days.

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[19] All the six have surrendered and their testimonies of Indonesian atrocities against the civilian population in 'liberated areas' (i.e. areas under the control of Fretilin Resistance Army) have helped to develop the solidarity bond among the clergy that led to later shift in the position of some members of the Catholic Church.

[20] According to a report written in November 1976 by a visiting delegation of Indonesian priests 80% of the territory with more than 500,000 people were still under Fretilin control which meant the Indonesian troops were in effective control of only some 150,000 of the total population (see Baptista 1987).

4.9 The Occupation

The main characteristic feature of the period of occupation (1975- the present) is a qualitative change through repressive practices. These have been characterized by the use of organized violence, involving arrests, torture, disappearance and killings, aiming at the destruction of all possibilities of resistance and organization in a determination to forcibly integrate the ethno-linguistically and culturally distinct East Timorese into Indonesia.[21] Massive military operations became the order of the day and mass graves and chains of massacres have become the best alternative for prisons.

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[21] After the disintegration of former Soviet Union, Indonesia is one of the last great surviving empires as a Dutch colonial legacy. A country with a land area over 700,000 square miles, and some 300 distinct ethnic groups with the same corresponding number of languages spread over 13,667 islands, Indonesia closely resembles the former Soviet Union in various aspects.

Massive military operations forced people to move away from their villages and to resettle in completely new surroundings. Resettlement sites were simply determined by military convenience, rather than by the environmental and ecological relationships of the individual, the main base of subsistence production. In addition, the confiscation of land and the appropriation of houses and other property have become an inevitable consequence of the omnipresent Indonesian army and the transmigration of over 100,000 inner island Indonesians to a territory formerly inhabited by only some 700,000 Timorese.

The end-result of all this is a society deeply traumatized in which, given the extended family system and the relatively small population, almost every East Timorese has lost a family member amongst the 200,000 killed[22] (Thatcher 1992; Boavida 1991); thus leaving the Indonesian forces in absolute control over the Timorese social and economic fabric.

4.10 Impacts on Traditional Systems

The Indonesian invasion succeeded in two main areas in which Portuguese colonialism and the Vatican had failed, over the centuries of colonial administration, in their respective areas of concern, for the sake of change, which by implication could be either negative or positive. They are 1) the break of traditional continuity, and 2) the collapse of old colonial relationship between Church and State.

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[22] According to the Church estimates 40% of the victims are Catholics (Walsh 1982:13).

4.10a **The Break with Traditional Past**. In the case of the Bucoli, traditional discontinuity was clearly evident in every aspect of the village life. This was apparent in the outcome of mass displacement of the Bucoli population as direct result of invasion and occupation. By definition the Bucoli hamlets were either cult-oriented cluster-based or road-water-oriented linear-based systems of group conglomerations, as I have discussed in Chapter One. The invasion and occupation have destroyed and/or forced both systems into security-oriented camp-based village resettlement.

This had obviously led to an abrupt discontinuity with the past, meaning forced abdication of ancestral values embodied in the familiar relationship of humans and ecology. Tight control of camp settlement had also helped to restrict ancestral practices that required adequate privacy. As previously discussed the traditional village system was in itself a social, political and economic unit which was hardly affected by the Portuguese 'indirect rule.[23] Military occupation overturned the structure of village authority through the appointment of 'Babinsa', an army officer who practically runs the affairs of the individual, group and the community in general. Consequently, one may comfortably argue that, in terms of external impact on traditional systems, for East Timor true colonization did not begin until the Indonesian invasion and occupation. The staggering scale of violence finally forced the Church to break its silence.

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[23] This may also justify, in part, Fretilin's comfortable advance among the Bucoli villagers due to the almost untouched traditional structures by the Portuguese.

4.10b **The Collapse of Old Colonial Church**. On 13 October 1981, six years after the invasion, the Catholic clergy in the person of D. Martinho da Costa Lopes finally spoke out against the Indonesian atrocities. This was to mark a symbolic turning point in the history (1530-1981) of the East Timorese Church. Unlike his predecessor, Mgr Lopes was seen as a 'nationalist' and 'bitterly hostile' to the Indonesian occupying forces (Walsh 1982:13). The people thought they have finally found a partner in the clergy who, without the old colonial state, have become just as vulnerable as the masses themselves and hence more acceptable and identifiable with the oppressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RELATIONS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS UNDER THE INDONESIAN OCCUPATION

5. Introduction

When the Portuguese colonial government left East Timor in 1975, it could not have been predicted that Catholicism, the religion Portuguese traders and missionaries had brought to the island 345 years earlier (1530-1975), was going to be made into a source of opposition to legitimize the present struggle against Indonesia. Although it is well-known how since time immemorial both minorities and majorities of a nation have used religion to legitimize their struggle and power respectively, the case of East Timor is probably an unique situation whereby the colonial religion (Catholicism) which helped to subjugate the Timorese in the first place, went on to be adopted by the Timorese themselves as religion of Resistance playing all the roles of a 'true' traditional natural religion.

Nonetheless, as I have already pointed out, there has been since colonial times an indigenous-Christian syncretism which with the fall of colonialism may have speeded up the degree of acceptance of Catholicism among the oppressed population. But the question remains "why has the cosmic dualism failed to accommodate Islam into a complementary union with local values, the way it has done with Portuguese cultural elements"? It is with this question in mind that the current conversion to Catholicism must be examined.

5.1 Catholicism: From Colonialism to People's Religion

It has already been pointed out that the number of adherents to Catholicism has grown more rapidly in the last two decades than at any time in the last four and half centuries during the existence of Catholicism in East Timor. In the previous chapter I have also discussed the two main reasons for conversion under the colonial conditions. Now, for the current phenomenon of conversion under the military occupation, it has been suggested that there is a connection between conversion and the experiences of war, repression, violence and terror.[1]

In the face of this very real threat of ethnocide at the hands of Indonesia, the Timorese have acted desperately but rationally to realise their goals by adhering to Catholicism, a colonial legacy, in order to strengthen their hope and their psychological capacity to resist. Thus, in spite of past partnership with the colonial government, the Catholic church, having been familiar with local values due to its long tradition of involvement with the masses, can now through Catholicism provide them with a language to articulate those very values since the natural religion lacked such developed means of expression as in the case of organized religion.

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[1] Some may argue that the massive increase in numbers of adherents to Catholicism is mainly due to the fact that one of the principles of *Pancasila demands that every Indonesian citizen must believe in one god. But, since there are many gods (Islamic, Buddhist, Hinduist and Christian) the question remains "why the East Timorese have chosen Christianity and not other religious faith, like Islam which is a popular religion in Indonesia"? By implication, my assumption is that the apparent turning away from Islam is more a political expression of the total rejection of Indonesia than a religious statement.

* Pancasila or the 'five pillars' of the state is best described as the religion and ideology of the military ruling class who have used it skilfully and effectively to silence their opposition thus preserving their position, power and wealth. The five principles are 1) belief in one god, 2) humanitarianism, 3) territorial integrity, 4) guided democracy, and 5) social justice.

In addition, although the Catholic Church has been relatively isolated from the outside world due to security restrictions imposed on the people, as a social institution, its local structures are part and parcel of a wider international network that links all Church actors together, and this is why when the late Mgr. Lopes condemned the Indonesian atrocities for the first time (1981), he created an unprecedented event with local, national and international repercussions. In other words he succeeded in what his predecessor had simply ignored - that is to mark the position of the Church, for all practical means, as a major force spearheading popular dissatisfactions resulting from injustice and violence.[2]

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[2] Although they belong to a universal religious body, most of the indigenous East Timorese Catholic priests do not suppress their nationalism. They have often been accused of being the main driving force behind clandestine activities. Their residences have become the sanctuary for some young East Timorese on the run from political persecution. As a result, like their ordinary Timorese counterparts, they have been victims of the same repressive methods of control. Moreover, two indigenous Timorese Bishops have been the centre of a political row: the late Mgr Costa Lopes had to be deported to Portugal in 1983 for his fierce verbal attacks on the Indonesian Army, while his successor became popular for his letter to the UN calling for a referendum on the future of East Timor.

The war of invasion and occupation, if anything, has helped to establish a close bond between the clergy and the people on religious, social and political levels. By the same token, the war of invasion and occupation has found the Timorese a new application of the past in the present. Unlike in the colonial period, where missionaries who normally went out to proselytize, in the present conditions, however, conversion is the individual's self-choice - in their helplessness the Timorese have turned to the Church establishment for refuge and comfort. Sunday and daily masses have become an alternative of a rallying point for the people to exchange feelings of dissatisfaction for a brief atmosphere of intimate cordiality.[3]

In this context, it follows that conversion, for all practical purposes, has become a central feature of political experience in the opposition to the Indonesian occupation. In short Catholicism has simply become the religion of the people.

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[3] So much so that some religious priests have been accused of inciting most of the public demonstrations which have taken place so far. Whether these accusations are true or not, there have been few religiously associated events. The youths's demonstration during the Papal mass in October 1989, the pro-independence protest on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the diocese of Dili in September 1990, and most recently the march to Santa Cruz cemetery in November 1991, for the religious remembrance of the latest victims of Indonesia's atrocities. These are amongst the most explosive collective expressions of anti-Indonesian feelings which have equally had explosive reactions on the part of the occupying forces.

5.2 Clerical Implications

The political involvement of the Catholic clergy in the current situation is well summed up by Walsh who, quoting the Catholic religious of East Timor, writes:

> "The Church is the only organization that the people believe...and has great influence amongst the Timorese people". Fortified by this popular support and freed from its partnership with and dependency on the State, the Church leadership has begun to exercise a new prophetic role articulating the people's criticisms, needs and aspirations and in so doing has inevitably assumed a political role vis-a-vis the Government. [And for the clergy] "living the faith without serious endeavours for the building of social justice is making the faith merely foreign and mystical" (Walsh 1982:11).

Such a statement of political position is a clear challenge to the principles of Pancasila which, although on the one hand promotes the belief in one god only, it simultaneously restricts religious freedom to the Church's yard only. It is uncommon in the tradition of Indonesia's democracy, guided by the dominant ideology embodied in both Pancasila and Unity in Diversity, to have 'public challenge, least of all from Christian Churches' (Walsh 1982:11).

Whilst for the lack of space it is not possible to give a detailed discussion of the triangular relationship (Timorese-Indonesian-Vatican), suffice it to say that each party is reasonably satisfied with the current state of affairs. In spite of Indonesia's immediate action following Bishop Lopes's condemnation of Indonesia's atrocities, despite the diplomatic manoeuvre of Indonesian Bishops, under pressure from the government, to have the Vatican integrate the Church of East Timor into Indonesia's Conference of Bishops, and in spite of the amicable relationship of the Vatican with the Indonesian government, the Timorese Catholic clergy are still directly answerable to the Vatican.

5.3 Cultural Implications

While the nature of the Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor was entirely strategic and political, the religious involvement, a late-comer and pushed into the arena by nationalistic aspirations and violence, has become the main surviving resource for the Timorese on the battle-ground. An entirely new battle-ground, moulded with cultural, social, political and economic conditions stemmed especially from the post-invasion period, and with the main protagonists wholly dominated by a younger generation of Timorese nationalists in close partnership with the defeated clergy of the old colonial order.

Under such extreme conditions one expects far reaching cultural changes in progress but these are beyond the scope of this paper due to the absence of up to date and reliable data. Nevertheless, the points which need to be stressed are (a) the direction of the changes and (b) the quality of the changes; since change itself is either to the benefit of the Timorese or not, it has been already underway.

5.3a **The Direction of Change**. The direction of change has been dictated by Indonesia, the imposing and influential power. The direction has been one way leading towards 'Bhineka Tunggal Ika' or Unity in diversity, the nation's motto. It was first coined and used during the Majapahit empire (AD 1294-1453), and revived and finally readopted during the four-year struggle for independence against the Dutch (Taylor & Aragon 1991:15) prior to the independence in 1945.[4]

It was not a pure coincidence that the Indonesian government, under the leadership of Sukarno the nation's first President, chose Bhineka Tunggal Ika for the country's motto. Like Pancasila, Unity in Diversity has been a most effective ideology used by the government to clamp down dissident voices throughout the archipelago.[5] East Timor is currently undergoing the same policy of change carried out elsewhere in the archipelago with the explicit aim of replacing diversity by uniformity through Javanisation.

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[4] It seems that Indonesia's continuing military occupation of East Timor could now stand to discredit the essence and to question the practice of Indonesia's prevailing state ideology embodied in both the Pancasila and Bhineka Tunggal Ika. On closer examination, unity amongst Indonesia's twenty six provinces, whose 180 million people vary greatly in terms of their physical anthropological characteristics, language, religious beliefs and cultural values is at best an indication of the success of Indonesia's military repression.

[5] The potential for the formation of break-away states in the unitary Republic is evidenced by the existing liberation movements like Free Aceh in North Sumatra, the West Papuan Movement for Independence, and to some extent the dormant independence movement of South Moluccas. The very fact that, so far, Suharto, the Indonesian president and the longest serving military ruler in Southeast Asia (over 25 years in power) has successfully managed to keep the melting pot together, despite such an existence of minority separatist groups, it makes the motto of 'we are many but we are one' looks more like a deadly explosive device that could go off any time as soon as demands for democratization find their momentum.

To look at it another way, Unity in Diversity is a deceptive nation-building concept that conceals an ambitious process of neo-colonialism. In order to enforce the process of Unity in Diversity, the Indonesian government had resorted to the worst aspects of Dutch colonial policy. 'Kolonisatie', a programme with the stated policy objective of resettling the surplus Javanese people to outer islands in the interest of improving social and economic conditions of Java itself is the main example of this (Otten 1986:71).[6]

In so far as the Jakarta government is concerned the programme has been a great success. Millions of poor Javanese peasants and other inner islanders have been resettled on outer islands like Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, West Papua and now East Timor. However, as far as the host outer islanders are concerned the outcome of the programme has been disastrous. The inner islanders have overnight become the masters and this has inevitably led to a far-reaching negative impact on local communities: land appropriation, displacement of original owners and cultivators, destruction of traditional values, and implementation of social, political and economic structures external to the interest of indigenous peoples. These are amongst the most bitter consequences of the history of Unity in Diversity (Gray 1984:29; Colchester 1986:89-9; Budiardjo 1986:111-117).

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[6] It should be noted that 58% of Indonesia's 180 million people dwell on the inner islands of Java, Madura and Bali which consist of only 7% of the nation's total land area of 1,906,240 square kilometres. These details stand in sharp contrast to the fact that almost all of the archipelago's 300 ethno-linguistic groups live on the outer islands (Taylor & Aragon 1991:15-25; Rodgers 1985:29-34).

The net-result is best described as 'ethnocide' which Stavenhagen defines as,

> the process whereby a culturally distinct people (usually termed an ethnie or an ethnic group) loses its identity due to policies designed to erode its land and resource base, the use of its language, its own social and political institutions as well as its traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values (Stavenhagen 1987:75).

Needless to say, the forced incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia has already placed the former in this direction of cultural change. Over the last 18 years the East Timorese have suffered a sustained campaign aimed at their cultural and physical elimination.

5.3b **The Quality of Change**. In the occupied territory of East Timor, the words 'change', 'occupation', integration' and 'ethnocide' are almost all synonymous. They are used interchangeably to refer to 'pembangunan', an Indonesian word for development. There is great supporting evidence of Indonesia's claim to be developing East Timor physically and materially: A good number of human settlers from Java and Bali (now over 100,000 people), road construction, house building, and establishment of new schools and hospitals. Apart from 'human investment', these are amongst the most oftclaimed evidence of Indonesia's programme of development.

Nevertheless, it is ironic that while the pace of physical and material development on Indonesia's outer islands is still very much conditioned by the unequal economic and power relations compounded within the uneven geopolitical and ethnic landscape between Java and the rest, East Timor seems to have the 'executive' treatment in that specific sector. However possible one considers the interaction between 'military occupation' and 'development', two highly contradictory terms, hardly before in history has one witnessed a situation whereby the invading forces claim to be so genuinely committed to the development of the people - the people whom they have set out to eliminate in the first place.

The current Bishop of East Timor, Mgr. Carlos Filipe Belo, said in an interview given in August last year that,

> The people of East Timor must be given an environment in which they feel they have a place, that they are human beings, that they are cared for and have the freedom to be whole people. This would be possible if the physical and material development which has been achieved during this time were accompanied by humanitarian development. ... This is what is lacking here. ...[By humanitarian development] I mean that the people [must be] given freedom of movement, of thought and expression. ... A democratic society is not yet in place here. ...If the people are living in a democratic environment, they will gladly be involved in the process of development. [But for this to take place there must be a referendum on the political future of the territory]. The important thing is the freedom to choose. ...If we have chosen freely [integration/independence] and there is misery as a result of that decision, then we must be prepared to shoulder it. ...(Bishop Belo in **'We Want More Freedom'**, in Matra magazine, 1992).

It should be noted, however, that, as far as the East Timorese are concerned, even the benefits of current material development are, at best, the by-product of an overall policy of engagement to meet both the political interests of the Indonesian government and material needs of its soldiers and transmigrants alike. At worst, current development can be described as synonymous with ethnocide. It is a sorrowful tale of injustice and unmitigated violence.[7] Therefore, to acknowledge this unintended material benefit, as a direct product of a genuine development, would be to neglect the actual cause of the East Timorese struggle and provide comfort to the aggressor.

True quality development can only come about when genuine efforts for the achievement of a more humane society becomes the main objective. And for this to be fully accomplished, development must be made to function as a holistic operation pertaining to the advancement in the social, economic, political, cultural and religious aspects. This stresses the need to realize the existing interdependence of all these different facets as a total process necessary in its whole for a true quality development which presupposes an ethical dimension prioritising human values in which the Timorese people eventually assume control of their own future.

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[7] This has interfered with the growth and development of Timorese youths physically, psychologically and socio-culturally. It has, thus, disrupted the cultural conditions which are essential for the social and political maintenance and development of the Timorese national identity.

5.4 Analytic Implications

In the light of what has been said, it is easy to misread the present work by insinuating that the author's emphasis is somewhat overvaluing the role of religion in the current political conflict in East Timor. Certainly, as I have already demonstrated, the study of conversion and religious change are one way of understanding the whole profound cultural changes the Timorese are currently undergoing. But the very reasons of conversion that I have also discussed may make the actual phenomenon of conversion justifying just what false consciousness may mean, if one is to be satisfied with simply seeking differences and limiting a boundary between religion and politics.

However, I feel that in seeking a dividing line between religion and politics it will only inhibit our understanding of both subjects in the current context of East Timor. Because in traditional practices there is no distinction between the sacred and the profane. Both coexist and complement each other in an orderly manner in the functioning of the society. The division between the two concepts is a modern Western one and does not represent the way in which small scale societies categorize human values. Although the colonial period saw the cooperation and coexistence of missionaries and colonialists, it was a corruptive relationship established with the specific purpose of controlling the scarce economic resources of the indigenous peoples.

It should be recalled here that the war of the Psychopaths arose as a direct reaction to the political power wielded by the missionaries, while the rise of modern Timorese Nationalism was a political and economic response to the colonial past as a result of the collapse of colonialism itself. Although both have no connections they had the same enemy - the colonial establishment - in which the Catholic clergy was one of the vital colonizers. Looking at the present massive conversion to Catholicism, if anything, means the failure of both the Catholic clergy and Timorese nationalists to stand up to the colonial government when it was most needed.

Hence under the present conditions it would be most unfortunate if the Catholic clergy retained its colonial attitudes and allied itself with the occupying forces. By the same token, it would be a shame if Indonesian priests, who are now posted in East Timor, would begin to preach without first learning the cultural context of the oppressed East Timorese, and above all, without attempting at condemning the continuing atrocities committed by their Indonesian counterparts.

The time has gone when the Bible was a mere colonial commodity and when the preaching of the gospel was simply delivered from the ivory tower without attempts at linking it to the cultural realities of the indigenous peoples. That was the time when "violence, even torture ... was justified against the natives who thanks to terror combined with preaching, have received the Christian religion" (McGovern 1992:427). That was the time when indigenous sacred/art objects and ritual practices had either been undermined or destroyed, simply because they were interfering with Christian values. And that was the time, as McGovern has reminded us, when 'enslavement' as the "worst sin" was never confronted nor condemned by the Church as an evil institution (McGovern 1992:427). And needless to say, that was also the time which has given way to existing theologies of liberation.

While Marxists were right in condemning such religious practices, it must be said that contrary to what they have predicted, religion is something which will always stay with humankind in different forms and shapes according to the realities of each society. In small scale communities, natural religions have always been part of life; for religion, as Geertz has argued, "has been traditionally thought of as a means of coping with life; to find in religion a way of conceiving it is to suggest some different insights" (Spencer 1971:5). And Ranger, quoting Cornel West's appeal to the Marxists, writes:

> "after a century of heralding the cause of liberation of oppressed peoples, Marxists have little understanding and appreciation of the culture of these peoples... Though Marxists have sometimes viewed oppressed peoples as political agents, they have rarely viewed them as cultural agents. Yet without such a view there can be no adequate conception of the capacity of an oppressed people--the capacity to change the world and sustain the change in an emancipatory manner. To take seriously the culture of the oppressed is not to privilege religion, but ... to believe that oppressed people have already expressed some of their potential in their actual products, their actual practices (Ranger 1986:6).

The main source for misinterpretations, normally, lies in the fact that when we talk of religion, either consciously or unconsciously one is referring to organized religions, thus dismissing not only the factual importance of natural religions, but also the existence and formation of syncretic religions (natural-organized). Yet in so doing we have simply chosen to ignore the views of simple societies in general, of what an organized religion means to them, and above all what a syncretic religion means to 'us'.[8]

The motives that lie behind the Timorese acceptance of Catholicism, in its syncretic form, as the ideology of resistance is more complex and, if anything, it exemplifies in most aspects the coping strategy of oppressed peoples in situations of Resistance and the cultural capacity of oppressed peoples to perceive and adjust to revolutionary upheavals. For example, Ranger, discussing religion in the African situation, illustrates his point, quoting Jean Comaroff (1985) with reference to the Tshidi of South Africa, how,

> so much has been the power of the South African state, that "one might expect the Tshidi to have been reluctantly acquiescent, increasingly determined by a set of historical forces that they could no longer act upon with any effect ... I shall argue that such an impression would be false, however, for the Tshidi response has been far more complex. Indeed, the forms of social practice that have emerged here are neither the product of the global determination alone nor of

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[8] The end-result is most likely one whereby a religion can simply be dismissed as fundamentalist, overpoliticised or conservative. Not that these charges are entirely untrue, but the point is that Third World peoples are often left with no chances to express their perceptions and actions taken according to the needs and demands imposed upon them by their own environment and by the pressures of change in the world order.

> indigenous cultural structures; rather, [it] is the outcome of a dynamic interaction between the two in a continuing quest for creative action upon the world. And, in order to understand contemporary Tshidi culture in these terms, it is necessary to examine the evolution of their symbolic order in relation to their changing position within the overarching South African social system (Ranger 1986:11).

Moving along the same context of argument but with reference to the Timorese situation, it should be emphasized that the East Timorese understanding of the universe based on social dualism made possible not only the adaptation of some aspects of the Portuguese rule into the traditional culture, but also an acceptance of the Portuguese to defenders of their jural order. The Timorese, meanwhile, retained their ancient ritual function of maintaining the vital cosmological balance (Traube 1979:8).

In short, in the present context of the struggle, the colonial past had not only syncretised the Timorese religious identity, but, as Traube has argued, it also had laid 'significant foundations for a new national unity...drawing the East Timorese together, and separating them from their neighbours (Ibid:10). All this sounds paradoxical, but it is nevertheless a familiar phenomenon in modern nation-states of the Third World. All the more so in the modern Indonesian context of Unity in Diversity.

POSTSCRIPT

In 1985 Lincoln wrote that it was easy "to overvalue the role of religion within socio-political revolutionary upheavals, given recent events in Iran, Latin America, Ireland, Lebanon, and Poland, just as in the past it was easy to dismiss its role as relatively unimportant, or to ignore it altogether" (Lincoln 1985:282). In the course of the following decade humankind has witnessed a chain of religiously related events taking place worldwide. The collapse of communism and the revival of Christianity and Islam throughout Eastern Europe, the fall of Marcos's regime in the Philippines, the defeat of the communist-backed regime in Afghanistan and the emergence of liberation theology in parts of Africa and Asia. These are amongst the most striking examples of religiously related phenomena.

In East Timor, as we have seen, as recently as 1975, it could not have been predicted that religion and nationalism, after a deteriorating relationship in the period of transition, would join forces, six years later (1981), in the face of a common enemy: Indonesia. Immediately after the 'coalition', in the period leading up to the end of the decade, the clergy registered a phenomenal increase in Catholic membership. But, as I have attempted to demonstrate, numbers of adherents, in this particular case, cannot be taken as an indicator, at face value, of the individual's conception of 'religiosity' per se.

The implication follows that, religion, as Spiro has maintained, is a "culturally inherited shared behaviour which when practised, its symbolic components are believed to satisfy the needs of religious followers" (Spiro 1966:96-97). The key phrase here is "culturally inherited". As I have discussed, the process of transition of Catholicism, as the religion of colonialism to religion of resistance, saw no interval of time during which the natural religion could be revived, in order, as Spencer has argued, to have its traditional cultural bases 'be translated into the modern concepts of nationalism' (Spencer 1971:11). In the absence of this cultural process, Catholicism, which by the time of the invasion and occupation has already developed a long association with the Timorese cultural tradition, was immediately adopted and 'culturally inherited', so to speak, by the people for their nationalistic purposes. Hence, conversion, if anything, is symptomatic of certain parallelism between religion and nationalism, however different the two concepts may be.

The point has already been made that, both, religion and nationalism, are ideologies with futuristic features in which the follower's faith and irrational submission in and to those in the leadership must come naturally. Where they differ is in the nature of the doctrine they propagate: 'salvation'. For religion, salvation is cosmological, metaphysical or religious - it is a rite of passage which is believed to compensate the submissive, docile and the oppressed with an heavenly award beyond this world. Whereas, for nationalism, salvation is material. It is a rite of passage which carries the subject and oppressed individual and group to their political and economic emancipation.

In the final analysis, however, 'manipulation', as a means for achieving religious and political ends, is a common practice of religious leaders, nationalist leaders being no exception. This is particularly so, in a colonial situation, in which, nationalist leaders normally come from the privileged class. Because they come from such a social background, as Freire has argued,

> ...they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. Accordingly, these adherents to the people's cause constantly run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as harmful as that of the oppressors. The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity. Our converts [nationalist leaders], on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour without that trust. ...The convert who approaches the people but feels alarm at each step they take, each doubt they express, and each suggestion they offer, and attempts to impose his 'status', remains nostalgic towards his origins (Freire 1972:36-37)

In retrospect, if one is to acknowledge both, religion and nationalism, as two potential ideologies, then, by implication, we are essentially dealing with two conversions: the conversion to Catholicism and the conversion to Nationalism. Since I have already discussed the phenomenon of conversion to Catholicism, due to space restrictions, I shall now mainly concentrate on the second conversion: the conversion to Nationalism.

6.1 The Conversion to Nationalism[1]

In the case of East Timor, this phenomenon involves the participation and conversion of individuals and groups from three main social strata: 1) the Catholic clergy, 2) the oppressed middle class, and 3) the oppressed peasant and labour class.

6.1a The Catholic Clergy.

The 'conversion' of the clergy to nationalism can be best described as a phenomenon that followed the clergy's own 'defeat', as a result of the disintegration of the colonial executive club, in which the Catholic clergy and the government were the main partners with a restricted membership extendable only to a privileged indigenous minority. As it has been referred to previously, with the disintegration of the club and the departure of the colonialists, the clergy, committed to its ideals of missionization under whatever conditions, had stayed on, only to find itself abandoned to the mercy of a completely new post-colonial situation, which the Church was not ready to face.

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[1] Note that conclusive answers to questions pertinent to this particular issue will have to await the results of further empirical data. Nevertheless, in providing the following tentative glimpse, I have taken the exercise to unfold a situational context in which issues of religion and nationalism can be seen less in their differences and more in their similarities, especially in the situation of simple societies.

As a result, for most of the period of transition (May 1974-December 1975) the Catholic Church seemed to have been inactive and defeated in the secular arena. At the risk of exaggeration, the clergy's social prestige and position of authority, which were enjoyed under the colonial encounter, began to wane. That was the time, when, the past was glanced at with nostalgia, and the future was awaited with uncertainties. On the other hand, nationalism grew in popularity and for a while the political future of East Timor seemed to have been guaranteed by a handful of Timorese nationalists, with the clergy as simple outsiders and unresponsive observers. Religion and nationalism were, then, seen as two sets of ideas apart in every sense of the word.

Thus, in December 1975, when Indonesia invaded the territory, it was no surprise that the Church leadership, in the person of D. Jose Joaquim Ribeiro, welcomed the event as a day of reckoning. However in 1981, six years later, the excessive numbers of human victims required the clergy to rethink over the nature of Indonesia's rescue operation, and this prompted the late D. Martinho Lopes to take position and eventually sided with the masses. By then, the Church itself estimated that, at least, some 40% of the 200,000 war victims were Catholics (Walsh 1982:13). This, for the Catholic Church, was a second defeat - the religious defeat. In short, in the light of what has been said, one is bound to conclude that, indeed, if anything, the alliance of religion with people's nationalist aspirations is a product of Church's own secular defeat during the period of transition, and its religious defeat following the Indonesian invasion.

6.1b **The Oppressed Middle Class**. I should begin by saying that, the phenomenon of conversion of the 'oppressed middle class' to Nationalism works within the same pattern, but in the different direction, and with different values, as from the clergy's model. Here, the privileged class, under the colonial situation, by virtue of their education and indigenous status, simply seized an opportunity presented to them as a result of the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule on 25 April 1975.

As I have previously footnoted, conclusive answers without empirical research can only run the risk of oversimplification as well as miscalculation. Nonetheless, there are some elements to glance at, if I begin by suggesting the question of why there was no Timorese nationalist movement in the period prior to April 1975, as there was in the case of other Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique or Angola.

Obviously, the answers are various and complex, and space precludes raising other issues pertinent to colonial administrative policies, and not the least, the degree of identification and association of the indigenous middle class with the social and cultural realities and conditions of the rural subsistence Timorese cultivators. Nonetheless, it is sufficient to say, that the lack of a liberation movement reflected, not the absence of nationalist feelings, but the successful colonial policies of irrational submission and assimilation. These resulted in the formation of double mentality (indigenous-colonial) experienced by the educated middle class, that inevitably led to a situation in which, for them like the oppressed middle class in general, as Freire has maintained , "to be is to be like, and to be like is to be like the oppressor..." (Freire 1972:25).

Therefore, contacts with rural life of the illiterate cultivators, if anything, would be in contradiction with the patterns of colonially expected behaviour. Obviously, the colonial policy was a great success as far as its objective to keep, for all practical purposes, the educated urban-based civil servants in obedience and grateful in their colonially calculated superior-subordinate relationship.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, the oppressed middle class was privileged as far as the social realm was concerned, but in the colonial structure they had no power-sharing nor had they any extensive degree of prestige and economic advantage. Hence, when the situation presented itself through the disintegration of colonial rule, the former colonial indigenous middle class immediately seized the opportunity to charge the former masters with exploitation, oppression and other issues that easily attracted the nationalist sentiment of the masses, whose nationalism, if anything, was far stronger and justified than that of the middle class, by virtue of their subjugation in all sectors of life during the colonial encounter.

This process is a familiar one in most former Portuguese colonial possessions, with only one difference, which is, unlike East Timor, other colonies had, in place, well established liberation movements long before the breakdown of colonialism. In conclusion, while the individual's motives for becoming nationalist are obviously complex and various, for the oppressed middle class, it is sufficient to say that, their conversion to Nationalism was a phenomenon which, largely, came about by virtue of their education and the failure of the colonial government to hold on to power. By the same token their acceptance by the masses as spokespeople was due to their articulation and appealing programmes pertaining to the masses's economic and political emancipation.

6.1c **The Oppressed Peasant and Labour Class**. First of all, it seems rather ambiguous to speak of the conversion of 'the oppressed class' to Nationalism. The reason is that, the concepts of nationalism, nation and people are almost synonymous and the words are often used interchangeably in various contexts and meanings. Needless to say, it is obviously more obscure, when one attempts to formulate a question such as this within a well-defined territorial boundary like East Timor.

Nonetheless, the aim of raising such a perhaps simplemindedly ambiguous question is to highlight what Anderson has maintained in his book, **Imagined Communities,** that nationality, nation-ness or nationalism "are cultural artefacts of a particular kind ... that has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being" (Anderson 1983:13&19). By 'large cultural systems' Anderson meant two relevant systems: the religious community and the ancient dynastic realm.[2]

It is these two cultural systems that, with their written sacred texts and divine ruler, in their heyday, gave rise to the individual's sense of imagined community, and in their encounter with new scientific methods of inquiry, led to the development of a true 'imagined political community', that was to result in the modern concept of nationalism and simultaneously in the dusk of Western Europe's religious and divine rulers of the eighteenth century (Anderson 1983:19).

In the case of East Timor while there is the relationship between nationalism, religion and the imaginable cultural community, in the absence of an indigenous written sacred text and an ancient divine dynastic kingdom, it is not possible to speak of the emergence of nationalism, graphically, comparable to Anderson's abovementioned model. For, as we have seen, Timorese nationalism developed after, and in reaction to Portuguese colonialism. As Anderson has pointed out, "...the paradox of imperial official nationalism was that it inevitably brought what were increasingly thought of and written about as European 'national histories' into the consciousness of the colonized - not merely via occasional obtuse festivities, but also through reading-rooms and classrooms" (Anderson 1983:108).

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[2] The former, as he has suggested, involved "all the great classical communities [which] conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power" (Anderson 1983:20). Whereas the latter is an "imaginable political system...[that] organizes everything around a high centre [in which] its legitimacy derives from divinity, not from populations, who, after all, are subjects, not citizens" (Anderson 198325-6).

It should be noted, however, that the unfolding of Timorese nationalism came rather late, or, at least, as it came about after the colonial disintegration, it had no time to take root into the post-colonial environment, because of the subsequent Indonesian invasion which followed almost immediately afterwards. It is in the context of the post-invasion period, that I have chosen to formulate the rather ambiguous phrase: 'the conversion of the oppressed class to Nationalism'. In other words, it was after the invasion and during the occupation that Timorese nationalism developed and grew in both quantity and quality, to suit the realities and demands of the current struggle, which, after all, is entirely different from the old colonial encounter.

Indeed, in the course of the almost two decades of Indonesian occupation, the increase in numbers of adherents of both Catholicism and Nationalism, themselves products of the occupation, is beginning to unfold a complex development in the social, cultural and political sectors amongst the first generation of Timorese youths to have acquired an Indonesian education. With Anderson, we can safely argue, by rephrasing the previous quote, that 'the paradox of Indonesia's military occupation of East Timor is that it has inevitably brought what were increasingly thought of and written about as Indonesian national histories into the consciousness of the occupied East Timorese - not merely via regular and annual obtuse celebrations of Indonesia's independence day, East Timor's forcible integration day and Pancasila's day, to mention only a few - but also through reading rooms and classrooms overwhelmed with the Indonesian system of education'.

The Indonesians who may still recall the famous article written by one of their early Javanese-Indonesian nationalists, Swardy Surjaningrat, in 1913, will certainly feel most uneasy with the current situation in East Timor. Surjaningrat had the following to say in his article called If I were temporarily to be a Dutchman:

> In my opinion, there is something out of place - something indecent - if we (I still be a Dutchman in my imagination) ask the natives to join the festivities which celebrate our independence. Firstly, we will hurt their sensitive feelings because we are here celebrating our own independence in their native country which we colonize. At the moment we are very happy because a hundred years ago we liberated ourselves from foreign domination; and all of this is occurring in front of the eyes of those who are still under our domination. Does it not occur to us that these poor slaves are also longing for such a moment as this, when they like us will be able to celebrate their independence? Or do we perhaps feel that because

> of our soul-destroying policy we regard all human souls are dead? If that is so, then we are deluding ourselves, because no matter how primitive a community is, it is against any type of oppression. If I were a Dutchman, I would not organize an independence celebration in a country where the independence of the people has been stolen" (Anderson 1983:107-8).[3]

Suwardi's words need no comments. Today, almost every East Timorese is a Suwardi. But it is most unfortunate that, Indonesia, through its continuing illegal occupation of East Timor, has somewhat stained such a remarkable nationalist expression of, probably, one of its national heroes, yet with the very blood of some 200,000 East Timorese 'Suwardis'.

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[3] According to Anderson, Surjaningrat, also known as Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, first got the article published in Dutch under the title of Als ik eens Nederlander was which appeared in **Des Expres** 13 July 1913 (Anderson 1983:107).

CONCLUSION

There are no conclusive answers to the issues I have raised in this thesis and other questions pertinent to the fusion of Catholicism and Nationalism. The discussion of a multitude of variables pertaining to the motives behind the fusion, has been tentatively offered, though the same, at least, while without a further empirical research, cannot be made on the future of the fusion itself. Nonetheless, in the light of what has been discussed, the following conclusion emerges as a reminder that, for the time being, the estimated ninety per cent of East Timorese convert catholics are a potentially important unifying factor, which has helped to seal and to nourish the fusion of the two contradictory forces - nationalism and religion - a fact which would have seemed impossible under the colonial period.

The fusion has been nourished with words and actions and colored with lives and deaths. The human toll estimated in the region of 200,000 people in addition to the calculated increase of 60 per cent in numbers of convert Catholics are, so to speak, two far contrasting record figures ever registered in the history of East Timor within such a short period of less than two decades. At best, the figures provide an apt illustration of a far more complex determination, and a creative response, on the part of the Timorese, to protect their cultural tradition from being exterminated.

The process of resistance can, then, be described as a cultural phenomenon and a rational East Timorese response to the Indonesian invasion undertaken to stress the differences between the occupier and the occupied. In the process, Catholicism became the ideology of Resistance and Nationalism became an integrative tool of that ideology. The union was made possible due to two main factors: 1) the Indonesian invasion and occupation, which resulted in 2) the autonomy of the Church. The former, paradoxical as it may sound, can be equated with the rise and origins of East Timorese youths's national consciousness. In other words, in the course of military occupation, the Indonesians, in their effort to forcibly integrate the country and assimilate its people, have unintendedly educated the Timorese in general, and the Timorese youth in particular that they (the Timorese) are, in every sense, a nation apart.

The latter, a product of the former, at best, provides a good example of an half achieved objective, if not victory, which the Timorese have been struggling for. As an autonomous entity and free from both Indonesian and Portuguese clerical supervision, the Timorese Catholic Church, with a syncretic religious values (natural-organized), has now been regarded by the people as their own. And as a social institution, through religion, an integrative tool, the Church has provided the basis for social identity and social cohesion in the face of the present crisis.

I hope that by concentrating the discussion on religious variables, I have offered an insightful alternative approach into the analysis of the current Indonesian-East Timorese conflict. It is a conflict which has truly become more complicated with conversion to Catholicism as opposed to Islam. Obviously, the current polarization between the occupier and the occupied is expected to remain as it is, at least in the near foreseeable future. Because religious affiliation is motivated by a broader belief system which overlaps the sacred to absorb the natural that is well-founded in the political, economic and cultural distress of the Timorese people. Therefore, material changes/development alone can offer no solutions.

Although, generally speaking, changes have proved inevitable due to technological development which has already integrated almost every traditional society into the modern world system, there are various elements of culture that have also proved resistible. As Ogburn has pointed out, in the functionalist tradition, that, culture, once in existence tends to exist for the reason that it has utility (Ogburn 1972:50). Needless to say, resistance to cultural change cannot be taken as synonymous with resistance to development, just in the same way as well-being cannot necessarily be equated with material wealth. On the contrary, as I have already discussed, people should be made fully participatory in the development programmes involving both their well-being and their material wealth. Unless this becomes a rule, minority cultural peoples, under both situations of foreign occupation and repressive governments, with programmes of development external to the minority's interests, are at risk of their own extermination. East Timor is a good case in point:

there is no other way to exterminate the Timorese culture than through exterminating the Timorese themselves as a cultural entity.

However, as it has been discussed elsewhere minority groups can make valuable contributions to scientific research, that can benefit a wider public on issues of various nature. The knowledge of socio-economic adaptations to precarious ecosystems, for example, is an apt illustration of what minority groups can provide to the wider community. Hence, it is almost needless to talk of cultural differences or cultural similarities between the Timorese and Indonesians. There are many differences as much as there are many similarities. In its own right, each needs to coexist, though, in different space and time, in order to complement the other. In a world which is increasingly becoming one-dimensional, the cultural integration of East Timor into the republic of Indonesia can prove too high a price to pay.

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